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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4538th meeting

Wednesday, 22 May 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-39372 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, India, Japan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Saleh (Bahrain), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Adechi (Benin), Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi), Mrs. Chassou (Costa Rica), Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon), Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia), Mr. Gopinathan (India), Mr. Motomura (Japan), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Lamba (Malawi), Mr. Ouane (Mali), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. Apata (Nigeria), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea), Mr. Gasana (Rwanda), Mr. Fall (Senegal), Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone), Mr. Hashi (Somalia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia), Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Musambachime (Zambia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

It is so decided.

I invite Ambassador Koonjul to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 May 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "On behalf of the Organization of African Unity, I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to address the Council under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure during the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The situation in Africa — Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa'."

That letter will be published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2002/554.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kébé.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Amadou Kébé to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Šimonović to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I am very pleased to welcome everyone to this open meeting to discuss the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council; Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity; and Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall.

Permit me to make a few introductory comments concerning our meeting today.

The ad hoc Working Group was established at the end of February following an open debate on Africa under the Security Council presidency of Mauritius in January. It has since met on three occasions under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius.

The background, purpose and format of this meeting have been fully explained in the joint letter of 13 May 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Mauritius. This letter has been sent to all permanent missions and permanent observer missions to the United Nations.

In brief, today's meeting on the work of the Group is envisaged as an "outreach" session. The Chair of the Group will explain its role, function and programme of work. More importantly, today's meeting will give the wider membership an opportunity to provide its input and feedback on the work of the group. In this regard, while taking all views into account, we would like especially to ensure that the concerns and preoccupations of the continent are taken into consideration in the future work of the Group. Hence, the Security Council will be in active listening mode today. Council members will be reacting in an informal way, where appropriate, to the statements made by non-Council members. In this way, I hope that we will have a truly frank and interactive discussion.

At the end of the meeting, I intend, under my own responsibility, to sum up the discussion by drawing oral conclusions that can be fed into the future work of the Group.

Finally, we see this meeting as a substantial follow-up to the Council presidency of Mauritius in January, during which the concept of the Group was first proposed to give sharper focus to African issues considered by the Council and as a stepping stone to our future discussions on this matter.

The Security Council will now hear a briefing by the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, Mr. Jagdish Koonjul.

Mr. Koonjul: I would like first of all to thank the delegation of Singapore for arranging this meeting and for giving me, as Chairman of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the opportunity to brief the wider membership on the Working Group's role, functions and programme of work. I am very grateful to Ambassador Mahbubani for bringing Africa back into the focus of the Security Council's work. This meeting is particularly significant, as it is taking place just a few days before the celebrations of Africa Day. I look forward to hearing the comments and proposals of non-Council members with respect to the work of the Group.

I am particularly pleased to note the participation of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, and of Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in this meeting. Their presence bears testimony to the commitment of the Economic and Social Council and of the OAU in the field of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Mr. President, you have mentioned earlier that the idea of the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa was raised in January this year during the public meeting on the situation in Africa under the Mauritius presidency. In presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2, adopted after the public meeting, the Council indicated that it would consider the setting up

of an ad hoc working group to monitor the recommendations contained in S/PRST/2002/2 and to enhance coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council subsequently established an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa at the end of February, with the following mandate: first, to monitor the implementation of the provisions contained in presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2 and previous presidential statements and resolutions regarding conflict prevention and resolution in Africa; secondly, to propose recommendations on the enhancement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with other United Nations agencies dealing with Africa; thirdly, to examine, in particular, regional and cross-conflict issues that affect the Council's work on African conflict prevention and resolution; fourthly, to propose recommendations to the Security Council to enhance cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa.

In establishing and drawing up the terms of reference of the ad hoc Working Group, there was a clear understanding among Council members that: first, the ad hoc Working Group would not duplicate work of the Security Council; secondly, the ad hoc Working Group would assist the Council in dealing with specific issues pertaining to Africa for which there could be a value-added contribution; and thirdly, the ad hoc Working Group would report to the Council whenever appropriate.

At its first meeting, members of the ad hoc Working Group held a brainstorming session in order to reflect on how the Group could best implement its mandate. There was a very rich exchange of views, and the Chair was tasked with drawing up a programme of work, bearing in mind that it should act selectively and be pragmatic, concrete and active, especially in its early stages.

Subsequently, the Group agreed on a concise programme of work as follows: enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with other United Nations agencies; confidence-building in the region of the Manu River Union; enhancing the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa; election observation and assistance to electoral processes in Africa; the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations; cooperation with the Organization for African Unity and with subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and others; enlisting the contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the work of the group.

Let me now elaborate a little on the work programme. With respect to the Economic and Social Council, the importance of the economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of a country emerging from conflict cannot be underestimated. We greatly value the decision of the Economic and Social Council to set up an advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. The responsibilities of the Security Council in a conflict situation and those of the Economic and Social Council in the post-conflict stage should be coordinated in a harmonized manner.

It is in this spirit that the ad hoc Working Group will invite the President of the Economic and Social Council and its bureau to discuss: ways of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; coordination between the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict; concentration on the post-conflict situation in Guinea-Bissau and on the situation in the Central African Republic; discussion of the contribution of other United Nations bodies, the subregional organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

With regard to confidence-building in the region of the Mano River Union, the Group will look into ways of encouraging cooperation between the countries of the Mano River Union as a means of ensuring peace and stability in that region. It will address the important role that the United Nations Regional Office in West Africa could play in promoting confidence-building measures in the region of the Mano River Union.

With regard to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, the ad hoc Working Group considers that the Special Representatives appointed by the Secretary-General for conflict situations in Africa already shoulder a huge responsibility in carrying out the Council's policy and implementing its decisions. The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General constitute a vital link between the Council and the parties on the ground. In this context, the Group contemplates working to find ways to enhance the role of Special Representatives in Africa. It intends to consider institutional changes that could be enacted to help the Special Representatives in Africa discharge their functions more efficiently and effectively.

The Working Group has also discussed questions relating to election observation and assistance to electoral processes. In this regard, the Group proposes that the United Nations Secretariat examine different ways in which the United Nations could provide assistance to electoral processes from start to finish, at the request of Member States and in accordance with the established United Nations electoral assistance procedures.

The Working Group is also proposing to take a fresh look at the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations. Drawing from the success encountered by existing groups of friends and the coordinating and drafting groups dealing with specific conflict situations, the ad hoc Working Group would see whether similar practices could be developed for other conflict situations.

With respect to cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations, the ad hoc Working Group felt that there is a general feeling among the members of the Council that there is a lack of communication and contact between the Council and the OAU. In order to redress the situation, the ad hoc Working Group will be holding meetings on a regular basis with the Permanent Observer of the OAU — and eventually of the African Union — in New York with a view to improving contacts between the OAU/African Union and the Security Council.

The Working Group will also discuss with the Permanent Observer of the OAU/African Union how the Working Group could contribute to the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Working Group will also look into the possibility of establishing similar contacts with subregional organizations.

The last point in the programme of work is to enlist the contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the work of the Group. Taking into account the increasingly important role and contribution of non-governmental organizations, universities and the academia in the field of conflict prevention and resolution, the Group will consider the appropriateness of holding working sessions with them as required, on a case-by-case basis.

Even though the Working Group has been very selective in choosing the issues that it is going to be dealing with, the programme of work, as you can see, Mr. President, is quite ambitious, and the ad hoc Working Group is aware of the difficult task that lies ahead.

The views of the non-Council members on how the Working Group can be operationalized to address the situation in Africa in concrete ways will be most welcome. We therefore look forward to the support of non-Council members as we strive to meet our objectives.

Before concluding, I would like to recognize the presence in this room of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Assistant Secretary-General. We are most thankful to him for the interest and the commitment he has shown for the work of the ad hoc Working Group. As everyone is aware, Mr. Fall will be leaving New York soon to take up his new assignment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. In his new role he will be involved in enhancing linkages in the work of the United Nations and other partners in the subregion, particularly the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union, among others. We would like to wish him full success in this new assignment. The Working Group will look forward to continuing to receive his valuable contribution from Dakar. We wish him all the best.

The President: I thank Mr. Jagdish Koonjul for his comprehensive briefing. I now call on Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Šimonović: I would like to thank Singapore for organizing this meeting and the Working Group

Chairperson, Ambassador Koonjul, for his very useful briefing.

It is an honour to participate in this discussion on the initial activities of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa, on behalf of the Economic and Social Council. It is another important step in the improvement of cooperation between major United Nations bodies, while respecting fully their individual competencies and mandates.

The international community is indeed increasingly recognizing the importance of addressing conflict prevention and conflict resolution issues in Africa. It is part of the general recognition of the importance of addressing the root causes of violent conflict and the interlinkages among relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and longer-term development for building peace. Effective strategies to deal with conflict prevention and recovery require a comprehensive approach that embraces actions in a wide range of areas, including political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights and institutional measures, as well as efforts to promote development. The Economic and Social Council has important responsibilities in these areas. I am very glad that the General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the contribution that the Economic and Social Council could make to the effective implementation of conflict prevention and recovery strategies.

The Assembly has called upon the Economic and Social Council to focus more on actions that are related to the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The Security Council, in its meeting in January 2002 on the situation in Africa, reaffirmed the importance of strengthening its cooperation with the Economic and Social Council through greater interaction, in accordance with Article 65 of the Charter.

The Security Council also identified the enhancement of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council as one of the purposes of its newly established ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Ambassador Koonjul's report has clearly indicated the commitment of the ad hoc Working Group to cooperation with the Economic and Social Council.

As a central intergovernmental body for coordination in the United Nations system, as well as for undertaking studies and making recommendations to other entities, the Economic and Social Council has Charter-mandated functions that can help in studies and actions dealing with the root causes of violence and the humanitarian assistance, economic, social reconstruction and development and human rights processes that are at the heart of peace-building. The Council's oversight role in matters of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance can have particular value in promoting better integration between relevant policy and operational dimensions, thereby complementing ongoing work that takes place in the General Assembly and the Security Council.

There is a gap between the end of humanitarian assistance and the beginning of systemic development assistance in countries emerging from conflict. This gap can be successfully bridged by the Economic and Social Council undertaking coordinated effort through its functional commissions, agencies, funds and programmes. Enhanced cooperation between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions is also of utmost importance.

In this regard, of particular importance is the proposal that the Economic and Social Council establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. At the Council's request, a report of the Secretary-General on the possible mandate, composition and modalities of work of such a group has been prepared. It recommends a flexible, time-limited approach in setting up such an advisory group, at the request of the country concerned. Such a group would review existing arrangements to meet the country's humanitarian, reconstruction and development needs and would make proposals to the Economic and Social Council on how to ensure that the country receives adequate and coordinated assistance in order to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and promote long-term development.

A draft resolution leading to the establishment of the ad hoc working group will shortly be submitted for consideration by Member States. The Economic and Social Council is scheduled to take it up in the near future, with the aim of first establishing an advisory group and then putting it into practice upon the request of an interested African State.

In closing, I would like to emphasize again the importance of the issues and ideas being raised in

today's meeting and to express my satisfaction at the closer cooperation between the principal organs of the United Nations in attempting to cope with the problems set before us.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to whom the Council extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

Mr. Kébé (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and on my own behalf, to thank your delegation for having organized this debate and, above all, you, Mr. Minister, for having agreed to grace this meeting with your presence, despite a heavy workload.

It is not a coincidence that your delegation made the important decision to include this debate in the Council's programme of work. The main reason for this decision relates to the interest and the commitment that your country has always shown in defending African positions within the Council. There is another reason, referred to directly in the statement of Ambassador Mahbubani, your Permanent Representative, made in this very Chamber on 29 January 2002, in the debate on the situation in Africa, which was initiated by the delegation of Mauritius. Ambassador Mahbubani asked about the results achieved on the African questions debated within the Council. He concluded that "There is no linkage between one debate and another debate on the same subject."

Undeniably, our meeting today marks the first step towards linking one debate to another and to establishing an ongoing solution for all African items discussed in the Council.

On 16 May 2002, I had the great privilege of paying tribute to Ambassador Koonjul, whose tenacity and generosity were led to establishment of the Working Group. The fact that Ambassador Koonjul moved from a generous idea to a reality, and now holds the chairmanship of the Committee is even more commendable. He has been a beacon for us in showing the way forward.

During that same meeting, I exchanged views with members of the Working Group, and I tried with them to define and lay the foundation for cooperation between the OAU and the Group. As I have recalled, the OAU is now at a critical stage in its development. Next July it will cease to exist and will give way to the African Union. Important decisions have now been taken on the establishment of the institutions and organs of the African Union.

One of those decisions relates to a review of the structure, procedures and working methods of the central organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. A new protocol was drafted by the OAU secretariat, and it will be submitted for consideration by the Council of Ministers and for approval by the Conference of Heads of State and Government, planned for 8 to 10 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The draft protocol contains a proposal to change the name of the Mechanism's Central Organ to the Peace and Security Council. The organs of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa will comprise the following: the Peace and Security Council, which will replace the Central Organ; the Commission of the Union, which will replace the current OAU secretariat; and a panel of wise persons, which is a new body.

Mr. President, since I am mindful of the objective of this meeting, and am anxious to respond to your request to encourage an exchange of ideas, I would like to make a few comments on the general approach of the Working Group, and some specific proposals relating to some items on its programme of work. On the subject of the Working Group's overall approach, we in the OAU believe that it should seek to promote and strengthen cooperative mechanisms, first, between the OAU and African subregional organizations in order to harmonize views, rationalize efforts and properly distribute actions in all areas relating to peace and security in Africa. Secondly, it should follow up the implementation of Security Council decisions, in particular those that stem from implementation of recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict (S/1998/318) and in the Brahimi report (S/2000/809). Thirdly, there should be better coordination of actions undertaken by the OAU and African subregional organizations in the area of conflict prevention. Fourthly, all conflict prevention actions should be speeded up, and peacekeeping or peace-building operations in post-conflict situations should be rapidly established.

On the subject of strengthening cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, in our view the

Working Group, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict, and in collaboration with the OAU and African subregional organizations, should organize donor conferences, encourage joint missions to assess humanitarian situations, ensure that programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration be effectively included in all peace agreements, and encourage the Secretaries-General of the OAU and of the United Nations to appoint special envoys for pre-conflict and post-conflict situations.

Regarding the OAU and African subregional organizations, we propose that the Working Group facilitate periodic meetings and constructive dialogue between members of the Security Council and members of the future African Union Peace and Security Council. Such meetings would seek to adapt views and approaches to changing conflict situations and to harmonize decisions and actions in the area of preventive diplomacy and in organizing joint field missions.

Once again, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for having invited me to this meeting and for having allowed me to share these initial proposals with Council members. I am sure that we will have another opportunity to sit down with members of the Working Group to see which of these proposals could ultimately be endorsed, and that we will see a fine harvest from the debate.

Before I conclude, allow me to pay special tribute to the Department of Political Affairs, with which we have always worked in seeking to strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. In so doing, I wish to pay public tribute to Mr. Ibrahima Fall. His decisive work has done much to establish a fluid, effective relationship between the United Nations and the OAU. Thanks to his forward-looking vision and because of his almost militant attitude to all African questions, Mr. Fall has helped the OAU to make progress on several African problems, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and the conclusion of peace agreements. I wanted to make this public tribute to Mr. Fall, because of his modesty and his great talent, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the OAU, and on behalf of all my associates in the OAU office to the United Nations, with whom Mr. Fall has played the role of leader and big brother in the great African tradition. At a time when he is preparing to leave New York to take up another post in Dakar, I am sure that Mr. Fall will continue, together with us, to involve himself in our great common task in the service of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate your country on the dynamism and the spirit of innovation with which it has contributed to the work of the Security Council in the year and a half that your country has served on the Council. The team of Singapore, under the leadership of Ambassador Mahbubani, has made a remarkable contribution, first of all to greater openness and interactive exchange in the work of the Security Council, but also to promoting targeted Security Council sanctions aimed at minimizing the impact on civilian populations. The organization of these consultations in May, which is an auspicious month for Africa because it marks the birth of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is another contribution to this effort that has been developed over the past year and a half.

I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, Ambassador Koonjul, the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, for having proposed during his presidency of the Council the establishment of such an ad hoc group, which was really a missing link in the work of the Security Council, and for having since then devoted much time and effort to making this Working Group operational. The statement that he has just made, which has painted a picture of the mission as well as the objectives and achievements of the Working Group that he presides over, demonstrates his commitment.

In an international environment of great pessimism, we might tend to underestimate the work of the United Nations in general and that of the Security Council, in particular regarding the positive contributions being made to solve conflicts in Africa. Since I have had the privilege both of overseeing the Secretariat services relating to the Security Council and also of being directly responsible for African questions within the Secretariat, I must say that that kind of an assessment is not only superficial but unjust. Indeed, the Council has devoted time, effort and considerable

resources over the past five years in order to gain a closer understanding of African realities, their nuances and their complexities, and, above all, to try to make a contribution to lasting solutions.

In that regard, the Council's visit three years in a row, precisely in the month of May, to the Great Lakes region to examine more closely the crisis in the region and try to move the various peace processes forward regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and other countries is an illustration of this, as is the visit organized by the Council recently to Ethiopia and Eritrea, again to move the peace process forward.

Lastly, I cannot fail to mention the different meetings that have been devoted to African questions, including issues not initially considered to be questions of peace and security, such as AIDS, but that, because of the magnitude of the pandemics, have a negative impact on peace and security in Africa.

The members of the Security Council therefore deserve to be commended for the work that has been accomplished. I am also delighted at the fact that during this period the Security Council has dedicated itself to strengthening bilateral cooperation between the United Nations and African organizations, be they pan-African in nature, such as the OAU, or subregional organizations. In that respect, the contacts that you have had with the different players involved in the peace agreements — such as the Lusaka Agreement in respect of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Arusha Agreement in respect of Burundi, or the Algiers Agreement in connection with the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea — all illustrate fairly well the will of the Security Council to be involved in a positive way in conflict settlement, but also in conflict prevention.

Naturally these consultations between the Security Council and African organizations have not always led to agreement between the Security Council and the different African organizations. But the Council has displayed greater resolve to be involved in conflict prevention and settlement, and also in peacekeeping operations, as is shown by the fact that today the largest peacekeeping operation in the world is in Africa, in Sierra Leone to be more exact.

The programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group presided over by Ambassador Koonjul reflects precisely the priorities and approach of the Secretariat regarding cooperation between the United Nations and African organizations. The Secretary-General, acting on the basis of the report that he submitted on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace and development, has devoted himself during the past five years to considerably strengthening cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. Recently, he held particularly important discussions with the objective of seeing all the recommendations that were made in that report truly implemented.

The meeting today is multifaceted. I would therefore like to briefly say a few words about some of its various aspects. As for cooperation with regional organizations and consultations with regional and subregional organizations — which the ad hoc Working Group is counting on — I must say that this has become current practice at the level of the Secretariat between the United Nations and the OAU and also between the United Nations and African subregional organizations. Not only does the Secretary-General have periodic consultations twice a year during the General Assembly here in New York and at the OAU Summit elsewhere with the Secretary-General of the OAU, but in addition the two secretariats for some years now have been establishing a framework for cooperation, accompanied by a biennial programme of work, which is implemented both by the Secretariat and the agencies of the United Nations that are in Addis Ababa. That programme of work is evaluated every two years and has constant follow-up within the Secretariat.

Along the same lines, several subregional organizations have also developed relationships with the Secretariat. These include ECOWAS, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other international organizations. Just recently, we held consultations with the OAU on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the Central African Republic in the light of the conclusions of the Khartoum meeting held by the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), as well as on Madagascar; the two secretariats sent a joint mission to Madagascar and participated in the Dakar negotiations and placed them under their auspices. There have also been talks on Burundi and other matters. Only yesterday, in fact, we were talking with the OAU about the timeliness of having the OAU Central Organ devote its attention to Madagascar.

The same could be said for IGAD on Somalia, and for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on Madagascar and other countries of the subregion, including the Comoros.

The second point for today's meeting relates to subregional consultations. The Council has already had a wide range of consultations with ECOWAS about the implementation of the Lomé agreement on Sierra Leone. In that framework, I would like to make the following suggestions.

I would like to propose the rationalization of the system of international exchanges between the Security Council and the Central Organ of the OAU for periodic discussion of questions on the agenda of the two organizations that could have an impact on peace and security in Africa. This would be in addition to the decision taken by the ad hoc Working Group to hold consultations on a regular basis with Ambassador Kébé in his capacity as permanent Observer of the OAU here in New York.

I would also suggest that such consultations be extended to all subregional African organizations. In the case of ECOWAS, that is already the case. But other organizations should also have such consultations, such as CENSAD, IGAD, the Economic Community of Central African States, SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arab Maghreb Union. Such consultations with the subregional bodies that cover all of Africa would make it possible for whatever conclusions are drawn from discussions with the OAU Central Organ to become operational and to be adapted to the subregional context. They would also make it possible to reduce the risk of either divergence or contradiction between the positions of the Security Council and those of African subregional bodies.

It is no secret that when it comes to political governance, the OAU has for several years been determined to take vigorous measures to exclude anyone who has taken power by force from its organs and deliberations. It may be desirable, in this regard, that the Security Council examine ways and means of better adapting the positions of the United Nations to that fundamental principle of the OAU. It is hard to understand that heads of Government who came to power through a coup d'état, who cannot participate in OAU deliberations, should be allowed to participate in such discussions in the United Nations.

In the same context, and still with a view to greater symbiosis between OAU and United Nations positions, the OAU decision to exclude anyone who takes power by force should be examined by the Security Council to see to what extent this principle could be applied not only to African States Members of the United Nations, but also to those from other regions. In this way, the condemnation of coups d'état would not be selectively addressed to African countries.

In order to be productive in terms of follow-up of the situations in African countries, it is desirable that such consultations should take place with the participation of Africa's development partners. It is obvious, for example, that consultations with the many African countries afflicted with problems of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as they emerge from conflicts should also include development partners, such as the Bretton Woods institutions. In that regard, cooperation with the Economic and Social Council should also be central.

Finally, the Council has evolved a great deal with regard to sanctions, particularly regarding Africa. Nonetheless, we must note that, with Libya, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia and Angola with respect to UNITA, Africa is undeniably the continent most affected by Security Council sanctions. The measures taken to adjust these sanctions and the discussions that have taken place to find some exit strategy for sanctions have contributed a great deal to adapting the sanctions and to making them much more appropriate to their objective. But the time may have come for a much more thorough and certainly much more critical consideration by the Council of the extent to which an exit strategy for sanctions could be far better targeted.

I would like to take up another question which is also on the agenda for today's discussion: the problems of small arms and light weapons and of the illegal exploitation of natural resources. These are questions to which the Council has certainly devoted a great deal of attention over the past years. The Council has managed to find ways and means to improve the implementation of its decisions in this regard. Nonetheless, it remains a fact that in this field there is a missing link: the fact that the recommendations, resolutions and declarations of the Council are not sufficiently implemented. Above all, there is a lack of effective coordination between the work of the Council and the work of African organizations.

To give just one example, Africa has already adopted, in South Africa, a strategy on small arms and light weapons, implemented specifically in West Africa following the adoption of the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms. It must be noted that while the Council has adopted effective measures in order to better contribute to the implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms, further efforts must be undertaken to address the network of light-weapons sales in Africa; these should not be confined to those who use weapons for commercial or military purposes in Africa. Work must be done to identify the countries that produce weapons and the companies that sell those weapons in Africa. Also, measures must be taken to compel them to respect the arms moratorium and to respect Council resolutions.

In that regard, the Council could ask the ad hoc Working Group, for example, to examine the feasibility of applying the recommendations of various United Nations expert panels on Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone to this arms trafficking problem. The Council could also mandate its President to be in contact with the Permanent Representatives of the States that harbour illicit traffic or those in which those weapons are produced, in order to ask them to make a positive contribution to the Council's commitment to the struggle against arms trafficking. The Council could also strengthen its own operational cooperation with the agencies whose work concerns illicit trafficking.

I have mentioned a few ideas that I wished to contribute to today's debate. They are not, strictly speaking, views sanctioned by the Secretariat. I wanted to take advantage of the open nature of this debate to express myself informally, freely and candidly in order to make a contribution to the debate.

I should like to conclude by saying how moved I was by the kind words of the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group and of the Permanent Observer of the OAU to the United Nations. I thank them, and I thank you, Mr. President, for your patience.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I should like to announce that I will be happy to give the floor to Council members who wish to respond to comments made by non-members in the course of the debate. I believe that that will make the debate both more interactive and more interesting; indeed, it was the wish of the African Group to hear the responses of Council members. Therefore, after three or four non-members have spoken, I shall be happy to give the floor to any member who wishes to respond. For example, the representative of France would like to respond after the first four speakers have spoken. I hope other Council members who wish to respond from time to time will inform the Secretariat of the point at which they wish to intervene.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Benin, who will speak as Chairman of the African Group for the month of May. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the African Group, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative of organizing this second public debate relating to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and for having invited non-members of the Council to participate. The African Group is particularly happy to see you presiding over the Council's work. Your presence illustrates once again your country's commitment to peace, security and development in Africa.

We also welcome the presence of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who will soon assume his duties as Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar.

Having placed Africa at the heart of its millennium concerns, the United Nations rightly sought to focus the international community's attention on that continent, which, despite the commendable efforts and the numerous reforms it has undertaken over approximately the past 10 years, has had a hard time finding its way on the path of development. Among the reasons that explain that situation is the persistence of wars and conflicts. The establishment of peace, security and stability is, therefore, a prerequisite for the economic development of the African continent.

We welcome the Council's opportune initiative to establish an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. In that initiative, the African Group would like to see a sign of the Council's real and lasting commitment to put an end to the cycle of violence in Africa and to accord equal treatment to all humanitarian crises without exception.

The United Nations has placed the individual at the centre of its concerns and considers the individual as the ultimate purpose of its work. Since the Council devotes more than 60 per cent of its deliberations to Africa, the Working Group's mandate should contribute to ensuring that the peace dividend for the benefit of African people reflects that same proportion. Our support for the ad hoc Working Group's programme of work is therefore commensurate with the added value generated in the Council's real commitment to Africa. Our support, therefore, will be constant as long as the ad hoc Working Group helps to strengthen the link and the cohesion between the volume of activities that the Council devotes to Africa and the effective implementation of its decisions.

Upon analysis, the African Group believes that the programme of work presented to us falls within collective efforts to examine and address comprehensively the question of conflict prevention and resolution. We therefore support the programme of work. We also support the strengthening of interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in order to consolidate peace through development. Therefore, the Security Council needs to better coordinate its African activities with those of the Economic and Social Council in order to mobilize international political support for peace-building in Africa.

Mindful of the fact that it has the primary responsibility for conflict prevention and settlement in Africa, and in its desire to facilitate the resolution of such conflicts, our continental organization — the Organization of African Unity (OAU) — has sought to redynamize its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The OAU needs its implementation of the outcome of this restructuring to be accompanied by the establishment of closer and better coordinated cooperation and by the contribution of the Working Group, so that the Council can be better aware of how Africa has evaluated conflict situations.

Accordingly, we very much hope that the Working Group will develop close and regular cooperation with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on African Countries Emerging from Conflict in order to make the peace dividend tangible for Africans and to ensure that the economic situation of those countries will not pose a threat to peace or exacerbate and ultimately destabilize security conditions.

The nature of the Security Council's involvement in Africa is becoming complex. It is no longer confined to classic peacekeeping because the character and consequences of conflicts have prompted the Council to integrate civilian and police components into its operations. With the break-up of institutions, we are seeing the emergence of non-State actors. As a result, civilians, and sometimes even United Nations personnel, are used as shields and bargaining chips. We believe that the ad hoc Working Group, because of its informal nature and flexible functioning, could help bring about innovation, adaptability to unusual situations or experiment with exploratory measures in the new type of intervention undertaken by the Council. Generally speaking, the Working Group could focus greater attention on prevention in its programme of work. The Council, in its formal mode, has been rather reactive in this respect.

With respect to conflict prevention, the Working Group could in particular discuss the following points.

On the issue of institutional dialogue, it should rely greater on operational early warning and preventive diplomacy mechanisms of the Organization of African Unity and regional African organizations. This practice would help perpetuate such dialogue and strengthen the synergy between the Council, representatives of the Secretary-General in the field and African organizations concerned. Ultimately, we might contemplate an identical assessment or, at the very least, a close reading of crisis situations by the aforementioned stakeholders. In all cases, better account could be taken of what precisely is at stake, providing better opportunities to reduce tensions and earning greater credibility for the Council.

As to election monitoring, the relevance of the type of intervention we have seen to our objectives needs to be redefined. In Africa today, voters, through their political parties and civil society organizations and thanks to new communications technologies — particularly the mobile phone and rural radio stations — are largely able to observe elections and to assess their legitimacy. Furthermore, and thanks to African non-governmental organizations, the practice of using observers from other regions of Africa has gained considerable ground.

On the other hand, the weak link in the chain of the electoral process is and will remain the establishment of reliable and permanent electoral roles.

Permanence in this context means a simple updating rather than a complete recreation of such lists, in which there is a possibility of manipulation every time an election is held. Therein lie the sources of contested elections that can lead to conflicts.

Reliable electoral roles require proper census-taking, reliable and operational information about civil status, credible inscription measures for electoral roles and, finally, an independent election monitoring structure. That is what is at stake, requiring considerable financial and logistical resources and thus increased and commensurate logistical and financial capacity. The Working Group might also take up this issue.

I take this opportunity to indicate that Benin, currently chairing the follow-up committee on the Fourth International Conference of the New or Restored Democracies, plans to convene an African workshop or colloquium to consider this issue and to draw up an inventory of best practices and successful experience on this subject. Through you, Sir, I urge all people of good will to assist Benin in convening that meeting.

With respect to conflict settlement, and in particular the practice of establishing so-called groups of friends, I would note that, from Africa's point of view, we observe that only external friends are summoned, while no account is taken of the many internal friends — indigenous peoples who have no choice but to love their country.

My point is that the Working Group should consider ways to enable existing traditional mechanisms, specific to each country, to help prevent conflicts or their re-emergence. This could include recourse to groups of elders, traditional or religious leaders and women's movements. Such a commitment from civil society in its broadest embodiment could help to mobilize national or subregional energies to promote peace and to re-establish trust and a sense of belonging.

We are happy to note that the Security Council is taking small steps in that direction. The dialogue held a few weeks ago between the civil society of Kisangani, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Security Council delegation was an encouraging illustration of this. I would therefore encourage the Council to commit itself resolutely to that approach.

I cannot conclude without commending the engagement and perseverance of Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, who has given body and soul to the Working Group. I also wish to express our gratitude to the other members of the Council for their ongoing support for this project, a timely response to the concerns of Africa in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Benin for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to extend to you, Sir, our thanks and appreciation for convening and presiding over this important meeting, which comes at a time that is witnessing a number of developments on the African scene — some positive and others discouraging — and thus requires an assessment of the expected role of this Council vis-à-vis Africa and an assessment of that role against the efforts currently being made to resolve the continent's conflicts and to assist it in overcoming the difficulties and obstacles it faces.

I would like in this context to express in particular our appreciation for the initiative of the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, that led to the establishment of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and the elaboration of its terms of reference and programme of work.

In light of my delegation's interest in the subject under consideration and our anticipation of a positive outcome from this meeting, allow me to address a number of specific points that we feel deserve to be highlighted.

The delegation of Egypt agrees with the broad outline contained in the terms of reference of the Working Group, including its mandate and the programme of work agreed to following its first meeting on 22 March. While it is hoped that the Group will be able to propose concrete, realistic and workable recommendations to the Security Council, the delegation of Egypt would like to stress above all a central and primary point: the need to consider the points of view to be expressed today by the non-

members of the Council — especially the African countries, which are supposedly the parties directly concerned — if we are to attain the objectives of monitoring the results of the Council's previous interests in Africa, enhancing cooperative relationships with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations in the continent, and developing the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on issues related to Africa.

Secondly, I find it important to refer here to a similar open debate in the Council in January last year. That debate, like this one, was held under the presidency of Singapore. It addressed the issue of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. It appears to us that many of the constructive views and suggestions put forward by the troop-contributing countries at the time — which were compiled by the delegation of Singapore in a non-paper, for which we are grateful to the delegation of Singapore — were, unfortunately, not incorporated into operations on the ground nor were they reflected in the mechanism for consultation with the troop-contributing countries that was established by the Security Council at a later stage. The Council has taken it upon itself today to listen to the views of non-members and the necessary objective of this meeting should be to strengthen our conviction that our positions will be considered and that our concerns will be taken into account.

Thirdly, concerning the issue of enhancing cooperation between the Security Council on the one hand and the OAU and African subregional organizations on the other, the delegation of Egypt acknowledges that the subject has indeed recently received the increased attention it deserves. Everyone now recognizes that the Council cannot act on its own or in isolation from the political and security arrangements already in place in the continent.

We should like to propose a number of specific methods for enhancing this relationship. For example, an institutionalized channel for consultation and the exchange of information could be established between the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group that would allow the Council to be accurately apprised of the positions taken by the OAU on the issues under consideration. The Permanent Observer of the OAU in New York and the Permanent Representative of the country chairing the Central Organ could serve as the contact points so as to enable the Working Group to listen to Africa's common voice on African issues under consideration by the Council. We would also suggest considering convening regular meetings, perhaps once every year, between the Security Council and the Central Organ, similar to those that the Council has become accustomed to holding during the last two years with the members of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt has previously suggested that the Council seek to involve a representative of the secretariat of the OAU in the missions dispatched by the Council to various regions, such as those that visited the Great Lakes region, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia-Eritrea. Here, as a first step, the Council could demonstrate its interest in responding to this suggestion by involving a representative of the OAU secretariat in the working mission that it agreed to send to Somalia in accordance with the presidential statement it adopted on 28 March.

Fourthiy, we hope that these suggestions will be translated into specific actions to strengthen the relationship between the Council and the African continent and subregional organizations. It is most important, therefore, that the Council pay due attention not only to ascertaining the common positions of Africa but also to responding to African requests as far as possible before proceeding to take any decision or action regarding the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. In the past, we have seen a number of cases in which the Council — or more specifically, some of its more influential members — has taken a path contrary to the one proposed by the OAU or by the subregional organization directly concerned with the issue. In the past, for example, the Economic Community of West African States adopted a position during the outbreak of the crisis in Sierra Leone in May 2000 but that position received no response. The States of West Africa had previously taken a common position on how to address the situation in Liberia; that situation was not addressed. More recently, the Community of Sahelan Saharan States — on whose behalf the Ambassador of Libya will speak later — adopted tangible initiatives to prevent the situation in the Central African Republic from escalating. Not only

did the Council fail to respond to those initiatives but some of its major members worked to hinder and abort them. What is needed here is for the Security Council to appreciate that Africa and its organizations have their positions and interests with respect to the maintenance of peace and the resolution of conflicts in the continent.

Fifthly, while we consistently reaffirm the need to respect the competencies and jurisdictions of the other primary organs of the United Nations, there are a number of other ideas contained in the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group for which the delegation of Egypt would like to express its support. Among those ideas is enhancing coordination with the Economic and Social Council. That can be accomplished, in particular, by holding institutionalized consultations with the ad hoc advisory group that is currently being established for African countries emerging from conflict, as well as by tasking the chairman of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group with holding regular consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council on actions needed with respect to specific African countries in order to prevent the eruption of conflicts or to prevent their resumption during the post-conflict peace-building phase.

We would like to stress the primary role that the General Assembly must play in election monitoring by, inter alia, supervising the activities of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs. If the Security Council were to play a role in election monitoring, we would suggest that such a role be confined solely to the Council's announcing its political support for the conclusions of United Nations election observers and their requesting all national parties concerned to respect the recommendations of observer missions.

Finally, the meeting today will undoubtedly result in the presentation of innovative ideas and varied suggestions on how to enhance the role expected of the Security Council with regard to Africa. Once again I feel obliged to express our appreciation for the increased political will that the Council has been displaying to shoulder its responsibilities towards the continent, as it has done with regard to Sierra Leone and Angola and as it is doing now with regard to the Great Lakes region and Ethiopia and Eritrea. I should also stress that the most valuable contribution that the ad hoc Working Group can make is to review all the resolutions, statements and declarations adopted by the Council, starting perhaps with the resolutions on Somalia adopted since 1991, moving on to those adopted pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa and ending with the presidential statement of 31 January. The Working Group could then assess which pledges the Council has kept — and they are many — and which promises did not materialize — which are also many. The investigation that the Council requested into violations of the sanctions imposed on the rebels in Sierra Leone and Angola and into the plundering of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to the naming and shaming of those parties and entities involved in violating those sanctions. The Working Group's review of the Council's pledges will, perhaps, increase the Council's own enthusiasm to redouble its efforts to implement what it has promised and to follow-up on what it has previously pledged with regard to Africa.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation is delighted to see a man of your stature and experience presiding over the Council, particularly at a time when it is discussing ways and means of preventing and resolving the conflicts that continue to beset Africa.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to express its full gratitude and consideration to Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for having initiated this debate on African conflicts and for his enlightened chairmanship of the working group on this subject.

Before contributing to the important debate begun this morning, and which, we are convinced, will be concluded successfully, my delegation wishes to pay a heartfelt tribute to Ambassador Sergey Lavrov, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for the remarkable way he conducted the work of the Security Council during a month in which international upheaval required the constant attention of the Council.

It is a fact that for a year now Africa has been showing a more serene face, bloody internal or trans-border conflicts having become less common or having diminished considerably in their intensity. It has been a long time since Africa reproached the Council for not

showing enough determination in resolving African problems. However, it is important to remain cautious and to work resolutely to attack the real causes of conflicts, which steep their roots in the extreme poverty still being fought in the continent.

The relative abatement of conflicts is unquestionably the fruit of collective awareness at the African and international levels of the tragic problems faced by the continent and the results of joint efforts of the Africans themselves and the international community for peace and security in the continent, a condition that is crucial to efforts to curb its economic problems and to achieve sustainable development.

Since the beginning of the past decade, Africa has been aware of the burden placed by conflicts of different types and origin on its economic expansion and the living conditions of its peoples. This early diagnosis led the Organization of African Unity, meeting at the summit level in 1993, to establish a central organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution, which has made a great contribution to promoting and spreading the culture of peace that Africans naturally cherish.

Since then the multitude of efforts on the part of African leaders and their active commitment to preventing and settling conflicts has attested in many cases to the irreversible nature of this awareness. In parallel, this effort has enjoyed the international community's support, which has been expressed in two ways; first, through the active support for efforts aimed at mediation, conciliation and good offices conducted by eminent African leaders, illustrated in particular by the support given by the Organization and member States to the mediation by my country in seeking to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and secondly, by the interest and the equal and unequivocal attention paid to the affairs of the African continent by the main bodies of the Organization — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Economic and Social Council — which have helped to strengthen the analysis of the causes of conflicts and the economic backwardness of Africa, thus giving African leaders decisive encouragement to put the continent on the sure path of peace, security and sustainable development, on which they had embarked with conviction of their own initiative.

Since the endorsement by the OAU Summit, held at Algiers in 1999, of the principle of democratic change through constitutional means, up to the adoption by the Lusaka Summit in July 2001 of the truly African initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa has been in full agreement with the international community regarding measures to be taken at the political and economic levels.

Africa has adopted an integrated approach, which establishes the interrelationship between questions of democratization and political participation, respect for universal norms on human rights, good management of public affairs and healthy economic policies on how to deal with the underlying, structural causes of conflicts and the obstacles to sustainable development at the economic, social and human levels.

Now we need to see how the international community intends to buttress this approach. I am grateful to members of the Security Council collectively for having established this ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, about which I would like to make some comments.

Regarding the role of the Economic and Social Council, it is worth recalling that under the prerogatives conferred by the Charter, much of its action on the causes of conflict in Africa fall to the Economic and Social Council. It is therefore natural that the Security Council act closely with the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to Article 65 of the Charter, to implement central integrated strategies for conflict prevention or post-conflict peace-building after conflicts have ended. We welcome the fact that the President of the Economic and Social Council participated in the public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa on 29 January 2002 and that he is taking an active part today in the Council meeting.

A stronger relationship, including joint meetings, as has been mentioned before, would allow these two bodies to better coordinate their actions and to avoid unnecessary overlap or conflict of competence.

In the matter of prevention and early warning, the Economic and Social Council has an unequal body of information regarding the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, accumulated through its funds and programmes, as well as because of its close involvement in these questions, which make it a vigilant observer of the structural causes that could degenerate into violent conflict.

With regard to NEPAD, the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council definitely has a role to play in implementing the goals of the Partnership.

Despite the Security Council's primary role in aspects of conflict settlement and peacekeeping, it is called on, through its ad hoc Working Group, to give valuable assistance to the Economic and Social Council to contribute to political mobilization at a high political level at a time when it is preparing to receive a mandate from Member States to translate the support of the United Nations into specific projects. This will take place against the background of a high-level debate on Africa, to be held by the General Assembly on 16 September 2002, and of the final review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, which will take place a few days before that date.

The ad hoc Working Group could become actively involved, particularly in the United Nations Development Group and the Office of Executive Directors in preparing these crucial events to mobilize enough resources for Africa and help the Security Council accept the validity of the preventive approach at this time of scant resources and dwindling official development assistance. These resources are far below the resources given to peacekeeping operations, but they are so necessary for development programmes.

In this context, I wish to point out that the member countries of the NEPAD Steering Committee have undertaken to organize a preparatory meeting leading up to this high-level dialogue in the form of a seminar, to be held in New York in mid-July 2002, where the participation and contribution of the ad hoc Working Group would be highly appropriate.

With regard to peace-building, coordination with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Group for African countries emerging from conflicts is crucial.

At the request of a country or of the countries concerned, the Economic and Social Council could, while setting up its ad hoc Group and during the Group's work, discuss with the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group the potential usefulness of extending the mandate of a peacekeeping operation or of mounting a preventive deployment operation until causes identified as inflammatory disappear. We wonder whether the Economic and Social Council should not invite the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council to nominate a representative to participate in the work of their Group.

Concerning cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations — Ambassador Kébé spoke about this very ably — the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter and those of paragraphs 16 and 25 of the OAU Summit Declaration, which in 1993 led to the establishment of the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, indicate that the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism is a counterpart to the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council on conflict prevention and resolution for African conflicts. So we welcome the fact that this Central Organ has undertaken to reform its work in order to have a better handle on events.

The regular meetings of the Central Organ, which are annual meetings at the head of State level, every six months at the ministerial level and monthly at the ambassadorial level, definitely have a body of information and facts that the ad hoc Working Group could use. This, together with the Central Organ's knowledge of African realities, would make it possible for the Working Group to do the job for which it was created, particularly in the early warning area. The ad hoc Working Group could, likewise, draw on the work of the subcommittee for peace and security set up by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Steering Committee; the subcommittee consists of the heads of State of Algeria, Gabon, Mali, Mauritius and South Africa.

Turning now to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, we recall here that preventive diplomacy is particularly desirable and necessary to ease tensions before they degenerate into conflict. In order to be effective, it is important, however, for there to be prior consent and active cooperation on the part of the parties concerned. In the case of early warning, the ad hoc Working Group could take joint preventive action with the Security Council and the Secretary-General by nominating or dispatching special representatives responsible for conducting or coordinating missions of enquiry or fact-finding missions.

It seems appropriate to me to recall the initiative that was taken jointly a few years by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU in appointing a Special Joint Representative for the Great Lakes region, which make it possible for both organizations to reach a better understanding of the situation in that part of Africa.

Finally, on the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, this practice may be useful for gathering information about specific situations, for coming up with appropriate solutions where members of the group are from neighbouring countries or from countries that have special interests in the State concerned, or for mediation or good offices missions between the parties to a conflict. It is important, however, to understand this practice as being one merely to assist the Security Council in its quest for a solution; that kind of group cannot take the place of the Council.

These are the comments that I wanted to share with the Council at this stage. I hope that the Council and the Working Group will find the comments useful.

The President: I shall now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Sir, for chairing this open debate in the Security Council. Let me also thank the Singapore presidency for taking up the issue of the ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa as a follow-up to last January's discussion under the Mauritius presidency.

Africa has been the focus of discussions within the United Nations system over past decades, as the frequent outbreaks of armed conflicts and persistent underdevelopment in that part of the world have called for the involvement of the United Nations. The Security Council, with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the United Nations Charter, has played a leading part in securing peace and in preventing conflicts in Africa. We have witnessed remarkable, if not complete, progress towards peace in such countries as Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia and Eritrea, to name a few, which was possible only with the extensive engagement of the Security Council.

Other principal organs of the United Nations have also been active in addressing a number of issues in Africa. The General Assembly has made valuable contributions in this regard by taking various measures, including the relevant recommendations of its Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and its facilitating role in addressing the "conflict diamonds" question. The Economic and Social Council, in particular, has a critical role to play in Africa. The adoption of comprehensive proposals for sustainable development in Africa at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council substantive session last July is just one of many recent examples. The Republic of Korea, by and large, supports the work programme of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, as presented by its Chairman, Ambassador Koonjul.

My delegation would like to focus on the Council's relations with the Economic and Social Council and its cooperation with African regional organizations.

First, with regard to the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in the context of preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa, the consensus is that an inextricable linkage exists between durable peace and sustainable development, particularly in the African region. The need to tackle the root causes of conflict has been confirmed, inter alia, by Security Council resolution 1366 (2001) of August 2001 and the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration of July 2001. We believe that without reversing the adverse economic and social conditions in African countries, such as the high proportion of people living in extreme poverty and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, efforts aimed at conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in Africa will be neither effective nor sustainable.

In this context, we welcome the inclusion of relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as one of the most important issues before the ad hoc Working Group. My delegation also commends the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović of Croatia, for having made a priority the strengthening of the relationship between these two bodies during his presidency this year. My delegation believes that it might be useful for the Security Council Working Group and the Economic and Social Council's ad-hoc Advisory Group to regularize inter-group consultations and report their findings to both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council for further deliberation.

Secondly, I would like to share some observations on relations between the Security Council and African regional organizations, in particular the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It should be noted in this context that the responsibility for creating domestic conditions for peace and development rests primarily with the countries themselves. But at the same time we recognize that the inflow of broader international assistance, such as the placement of United Nations peacekeeping operations and various forms of economic aid, including official development assistance, remains indispensable.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes locally tailored initiatives on Africa such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We greatly admire the guiding role of the OAU in launching that truly fitting programme. My delegation also recognizes the importance of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on NEPAD to be held this coming September, which will highlight the role of the United Nations in assisting the implementation of NEPAD.

We understand that both the Security Council and the General Assembly support closer ties between the United Nations and the OAU, and a stronger role for the OAU in the field of regional peace and security. My delegation believes that strengthened participation by OAU representatives in the Security Council discussions on African issues, where practicable, could lead to a better understanding of regional situations. Building on the achievement of initiating NEPAD in the social and economic field, African countries could, in the longer term, consider devising a sort of regional conflict-prevention mechanism to monitor the regional security situation, issue early warnings and act as a liaison with United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In closing, my delegation hopes that the Security Council ad hoc Working Group will produce meaningful results and thus contribute to the work of the Council on many African issues.

The President: As I indicated earlier that I would, I shall now give the floor to a member of the Council to respond to some of the comments made in this debate so far, in line with the wish of the African Group to make the debate more interactive.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): We thank you, Sir, for personally presiding over this extremely important Security Council meeting. We also thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul for having been at the starting point of our debate by creating the ad hoc Working Group, which he is leading with all of his talent.

As you have invited us to do, Sir, I shall try to respond to some of the comments made by the preceding speakers. Basically, I shall endeavour, on behalf of France, to address the most delicate subjects that have been raised. Indeed, that is how our discussion can be of greatest interest.

My first observation is that more and more African leaders are themselves taking charge of the search for solutions to African crises. This is an extremely positive development, which we must welcome. To cite a few examples, as Ambassador Baali reminded us, Algeria has played a decisive role in the search for a solution to the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The countries of the Great Lakes region, through the Lusaka Agreement, have charted the course towards a solution to the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for their part, have long sought a solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. Therefore, the role of the Security Council is increasingly to accompany the African countries themselves in implementing the solutions that they themselves develop. This is a very positive point.

Nonetheless, it is a point that I believe requires careful consideration as to the modalities of such cooperation. I believe that the Security Council cannot only be a provider of services that would respond, toeing the line, to orders from African heads of State, who in a way would unilaterally set the rules of the game. A true partnership is necessary from the very start, in other words from the time that agreements are negotiated, at least if African leaders want to entrust all or part of the implementation of their plans to the Security Council.

To cite an example, we have just conducted our third mission to the Great Lakes region. The Lusaka Agreement, as written, calls upon the Security Council forcibly to disarm the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups. We received the Agreement; we read it; and we immediately said: mission impossible. Furthermore, how could United Nations Blue Helmets succeed in doing what the Rwandan army has not managed to do on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in

the past three years? Thus, afterwards, we had lengthy discussions with our Lusaka Agreement partners to say yes, of course, to disarmament and repatriation of ex-FAR and Interahamwe, but on a voluntary rather than a forced, imposed basis.

I cite that example to show how desirable it is for the African leaders, when they commit themselves to conflict resolution and wish to give responsibilities to the Security Council, to involve the Council in advance, when they see fit to do so, and, before adopting a plan, to make sure that what they are asking of the United Nations and the Security Council is something that the Council can indeed do.

My second comment is that some speakers expressed regret that agreements between the regional or subregional organizations and the Security Council are not always perfect from the outset. The representative of Egypt gave the example of ECOWAS and of Sierra Leone. I personally believe that it is quite normal for us to have views that sometimes differ, simply because the leaders of the region are in direct contact with the realities, and are sometimes very closely related to some of those involved in a conflict. For our part, we look at the situation from outside, and we send often large numbers of troops — 17,000, for example, to Sierra Leone. So it is normal for us to have this discussion. But what I would like to emphasize to those who are listening to us is to what extent this discussion throughout the successful management of the Sierra Leone crisis was, in the end, extremely productive. We started from quite different perspectives, and little by little we managed, here too, to build a partnership, which has enabled us, I believe I can say, to succeed together. The elections that have just taken place in Sierra Leone bear eloquent witness to this.

The third comment is on a delicate question, that of sanctions, which Ibrahima Fall referred to. What strikes me is that, basically the African leaders are increasingly asking us to adopt sanctions against some of their own who are not complying with commitments that they themselves have undertaken.

We saw this in our recent mission to the Great Lakes region, where we had an extremely interesting debate between the 15 members of the Security Council and all the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers of the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement. They unanimously asked us to adopt sanctions against those of their own who were not keeping their commitments. In particular, they asked us to withdraw troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sir Jeremy Greenstock, who is right here, told them: "Well, we are not very fond of adopting sanctions", to which the other side replied: "Yes, but we are asking you to adopt these sanctions." The final communiqué, which I invite you to read, exactly reflects that debate.

The comment I would like to share with you this morning is that here again what we need to develop is a real partnership. When the African leaders ask us to adopt sanctions, I think they must know that if we do that it is first of all up to them, the regional countries, to see to it that the sanctions are properly implemented. We have been able to verify the extent to which sanctions can succeed. The most recent case is that of Angola, where without question the sanctions adopted by the Security Council played an important, perhaps even decisive, role. This is simply because all of the countries of the region played the game perfectly and cooperated with the Council.

So, if we adopt sanctions upon the request of the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement, those sanctions could succeed only if all the countries of the region participated in their implementation. This applies to Burundi as well, where we have been having a dialogue — which is to continue in the coming week — concerning the rebel groups that refuse to end the fighting and join the peace process.

These initial comments relate to conflict management once conflicts erupt. We all agree that it is better to prevent than to correct, and all the speakers have emphasized the extent to which prevention is necessary. This is often a very difficult subject, because most African crises are in fact internal crises. Here, we come up against Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter if we give it a close reading.

At what point should we move past the question of non-interference in internal affairs in order to embark on the prevention of a crisis that we all see coming? Here again, I believe that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subregional organizations can point the way.

I find it striking to observe, for example in the crisis in Madagascar that was raised by Ibrahima Fall and mentioned by others as well, how the OAU, when confronted by a grave crisis, albeit an internal one, unhesitatingly committed itself to making a full

contribution to the quest for a peaceful solution. I believe that our Council, which hesitates to follow the OAU, should not have this hesitation. When the OAU believes that it should play its role because the very future of a country is at stake, the Council should be prepared to work side by side with the OAU in its initiative, as long as the OAU wishes that.

There is a last point that I would like to raise, a follow-up to the preceding point, and that is the electoral processes. Unfortunately, it is often electoral processes which lead to crises. That is just the case in Madagascar, but there are other recent examples that could be mentioned in that region of Africa which can plunge us into situations that are then difficult to manage.

Here I believe that the Security Council does not have a direct role. But since we are all in this brainstorming sort of meeting, I believe it would be good for us to reflect together on certain rules of the game that might be accepted by all. What I mean is that the United Nations Secretariat, which has long experience in this area and which has established very clear rules of the game, should work with the OAU so that when a country requests that an electoral process be observed, there would be some sort of United Nations-OAU partnership to observe it.

When we say "observe", that does not mean being present just on election day. It means being present, as the United Nations requests, during the preceding months so that the preparations for the elections can be blameless. It means being present during the elections themselves, and when the results are announced it would be appropriate that a single spokesperson represent the United Nations and the OAU, to avoid the cacophony of often diverging announcements.

The Security Council does not need to intervene directly on this subject, but since it has been raised, I think the Council, which on occasion deals with the grave consequences of difficult elections, can make recommendations about possible courses of action. I think this is an additional reason for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

These are the few comments that I wish to make on behalf of France on the subjects that seem to me to be the most delicate among all of those raised by the preceding speakers in this extremely rich and positive discussion.

The President: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Mr. President, we owe you a debt of gratitude for providing us this opportunity to share our views with you on the work of the ad hoc Working Group chaired by Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul.

We have studied with interest the extensive mandate given to him and his group. We are encouraged by the progress made by the group to date. We listened with great attention to Ambassador Koonjul, and we thank him for his exhaustive report. The Working Group and its very able Chairman deserve our high appreciation.

Mr. Foreign Minister, your return to the Council within a few months to revisit the conflicts in Africa demonstrates your commitment to bringing about a difference in the lives across that embattled continent — a difference, as against indifference; an impetus for action, as against inaction; a fresh look at the state of affairs, as against a routine sense of resolutions and statements. This is in consonance with the kind of vibrant leadership that Singapore and Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani have been providing this Council this month.

We are particularly pleased that the dialogue has included Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a sister body that shares so many of the tasks of the Security Council in conflict prevention, if not resolution. We also welcome the participation of Ambassador Amadou Kébé and Mr. Ibrahima Fall and thank them for their thought-provoking statements.

Sadly, Africa remains a conflict-ridden continent. A dozen African countries are experiencing active conflict, and many others are showing signs of instability. That reality persists despite numerous resolutions and statements, sanctions and special missions. The Council has been spending about three quarters of its time on African issues. While it has not had the kind of success for which we had hoped, a modicum of progress has been made. Peace has been restored in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Angola, but the quest for peace in the Great Lakes region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda remains elusive.

West Africa remains fragile. There is instability in Liberia, and threats of spillover into neighbouring countries are real. Somalia has yet to find stability within and peace with its neighbours. Sudan has remained entangled in a civil war for two decades. Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic are tottering in post-conflict peace-building. Western Sahara languishes in an apparently intractable dispute. Each of these issues is dealt with as an individual item by the Council, and rightly so. All of them have unique historical legacies, dimensions and factors. All of them require specific responses, and, if the conflicts are not resolved, the Council must share a part of the responsibility.

The Working Group should not become a "back burner" for unresolved conflicts. Its existence should not mean that the Council can become complacent or that it can relinquish any of its primary responsibilities. Africa's problems are all too real. That is so evident as to require no further study or analysis.

Let me cite an example: the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For the past few years, the Council has, under Chapter VII, been asking foreign forces to withdraw from the country's territory. Most of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's allies have withdrawn, but at least one of its adversaries is maintaining some 40,000 troops 2,000 kilometres inside the country. Here, as in the Middle East, the Council has failed to secure compliance with its mandatory resolutions. The international community acted elsewhere to restore the sovereignty of fellow Member States subjected to military aggression. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not been favoured with such action. The country's resources are still being plundered. The Council-mandated expert panel has reported its findings and conclusions. The nexus between conflict and plunder has been exposed and names have been named, yet the tragedy continues unabated.

I should like to make a few comments on the ad hoc Working Group's mandate. First, with regard to monitoring the implementation of Council decisions, we are of the view that the Working Group should take care to avoid duplicating the work of the Secretariat, that of the regional and subregional offices of the United Nations and that of the Special Representatives and Representatives of the Secretary-General. In our understanding, it is the Secretariat's responsibility to ensure the implementation of Council decisions. Monitoring effective follow-up is also a Secretariat competence. The Secretary-General has in place the necessary instruments — Special Representatives, Representatives and Officers — and, when necessary, sends special missions such as inter-agency teams. The reports submitted by the Secretary-General, the briefings provided by the Secretariat, the monthly working luncheons, the annual retreats and other meetings should provide the Council with the necessary information, analysis and recommendations for Council action. There is, therefore, a need for the Group to be innovative in discharging this task and to avoid duplication.

Secondly, with respect to enhancing cooperation and coordination with the Economic and Social Council, we note that the Working Group plans to meet with the Economic and Social Council bureau on that question. Before embarking on such an exercise, it would perhaps be pertinent to determine whether anything has been going wrong. One needs to find out if the Secretariat, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have identified any lack of cooperation, unnecessary duplication, encroachment or inattention.

Thirdly, concerning the examination of regional and cross-country conflict issues, ample research and studies have already been carried out on that matter. In addition, there are the reports of the Inter-Agency Task Force. Should the Council need further input, it could consider studies published by think tanks such as the International Crisis Group (ICG), the Carnegie Foundation, the Institute for Policy Analysis (IPA) and other regional and research centres. In recent years, the Council has been engaging increasingly in interaction with think tanks, as well as with non-governmental organizations. While on the Council, Bangladesh found such encounters involving seminars, symposia and other formal meetings to be extremely useful. A seminar on a regional approach held under the Colombian presidency was also appreciated. We thought such exchanges contributed usefully to decision-making in the Council.

Fourthly, with regard to cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General has established a forum that has proved useful, the annual high-level meeting with regional organizations. The ad hoc Working Group should take care that it does not duplicate that work. The Working Group could indeed perform a most useful role and add

value to the Council's work by acting as a conduit between it and the world beyond. It should — and we are certain that it will — spur the Council to lead rather than to react. We are confident that the prodigious qualities of Ambassador Koonjul will make that possible. It is our hope that the Group will help focus on action rather than on rhetoric, and also that it will assist in throwing a spotlight on the root causes of conflict.

In addressing Africa's conflict, we need not reinvent the wheel. Rather, we should revisit the Secretary-General's April 1998 report (S/1998/318) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We should take action to implement the recommendations, some of which have been also endorsed in Security Council resolutions. In a globalizing world, interdependence is no longer an abstract mantra. Asia is not that far from Africa, nor is any other continent.

In April 1998, in the report that we have just cited, the Secretary-General stated,

> "... African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them." (*S/1998/318, para. 5*)

Those words were more a wake-up call than an admonition. Four years have elapsed since then. Let this interactive meeting be an impetus to reversing this state of affairs.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now call on the representative of Cuba, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We feel honoured, Sir, by your presiding over this Council meeting. We welcome the meeting's format, in which Council non-members have been able to hear the valuable information presented by Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa; by Mr. Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, by Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to whom we bid a fond farewell.

We wonder, however, why this type of meeting is not also being extended to other groups and subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, such as the working groups examining the question of sanctions and peacekeeping operations. As we have said on earlier occasions, there is much wisdom among Africa's leaders and representatives. No one has a better understanding of African problems or is in a better position to find the most appropriate solutions than they.

For that reason, Cuba is participating in this debate with particular eagerness to hear the opinions and the proposals of the African delegations. In addition, we believe that the Council Working Group, whenever possible, should be chaired by an African representative.

The Group should have frequent and direct contact with the protagonists in conflicts and with African regional and subregional mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In spite of what has been said in debates and affirmed in resolutions, emphasis continues to be placed on reaction to conflicts rather than on prevention.

As has been said here, the best solution is prevention. Prevention means addressing the most profound causes of conflict, such as poverty and underdevelopment. However, many of the measures that are necessary to eliminate the causes of conflict in Africa and to consolidate peace and sustainable development are clearly beyond the mandate of the Security Council and correspond to other organs, such as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Therefore, one of the functions of the Working Group should be the careful consideration of activities undertaken by the Security Council in Africa that may need to be reconsidered because the Council is not the appropriate organ to undertake them.

Our insistence on clearly delimiting the responsibilities of the Security Council is a response not to a purely conceptual concern, but rather to the fact that, when this organ assumes functions that are beyond its competence and for which it is therefore not duly prepared, the countries that are subject to such measures suffer the consequences, while functions for which the Security Council is responsible and accountable are inevitably affected.

There is sometimes a proliferation of United Nations initiatives and proposals of various types for Africa, but there is still no comprehensive and integrated approach to solving problems related to peace, security and development in the continent, nor is there any mechanism for periodic evaluations of the implementation of what has been agreed. One reason why such an approach remains elusive is the inadequate level of coordination and communication among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We hope that the work of the Security Council Working Group will contribute to changing that situation.

The work of the Working Group should complement and not substitute for the efforts of other organs to address African problems. It is very important that there be no duplication. We propose that periodic meetings be held involving the Chairmen of the Security Council Working Group on Africa, the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and the ad hoc Advisory Group of the Economic and Social Council on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. The results of these meetings should be duly reported to Member States.

The issue before us today could well be the principal item for an initial meeting between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. There is no reason not to hold periodic joint meetings between those two bodies. African questions are the subject of over half the activities of the Security Council. It would therefore be very useful for the Working Group to draw up an accurate account of the successes and failures in Africa and to prepare a summary of experiences and lessons learned. It should also examine the way in which the Security Council deals with different African problems and recommend measures to avoid selective action by this organ, which, unfortunately, is reflected in swift action with regard to certain conflicts and in virtual passivity with regard to others.

You have asked us to be brief, Sir, and for that reason I will conclude at this point. We hope that this meeting will not be an isolated event and that we will be able to follow up the work of the Working Group on Africa in future debates.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I make this statement on behalf of the States members of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD). I was asked to deliver this statement at a meeting held on 20 May. The following countries are members of CENSAD: Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia and, as observer, Liberia.

At the outset, I extend our thanks and appreciation to you, Sir, on behalf of the members of CENSAD, for devoting today's open meeting to African issues under your country's presidency of the Council. We highly appreciate the role of the mission and Permanent Representative of Singapore, Ambassador Mahbubani, in the Security Council and throughout the United Nations.

I also wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for his important role. We pay tribute to his activities concerning all African issues within this Chamber and in the framework of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. We also thank Ambassador Ibrahima Fall and commend his efforts. We agree with all the ideas and proposals he has put forth to date.

I also thank Ambassador Lavrov for his successful leadership of the Council last month.

We welcome Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, Permanent Representative of friendly Croatia and President of the Economic and Social Council.

Our Community, established on 4 February 1998, has a membership of 19 States that transcends the inherited colonial divisions. Its membership extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the West to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in the East and from Nigeria and the Central African Republic in the South to the Mediterranean Sea in the North. Our Community thus reflects the object of the approach being adopted by the Security Council and the time it devotes to addressing African issues. We note with satisfaction the positive developments in Sierra Leone and Angola, as well as in

the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Such developments give us great hope that these issues will be resolved.

While we encourage such trends, we feel that the Council's responsibility for African issues remains important. We also feel that a great deal more needs to be done to resolve these, the most complex issues in the world, in which political, historical and social factors overlap, including the negative legacy of the colonial Powers in this ethnically complex continent.

Given the special nature of African conflicts and the overlapping factors I have mentioned, the establishment of regional and subregional organizations in the continent has contributed most effectively to the prevention of certain conflicts and to the resolution of others. These organizations possess special knowledge of the various aspects of conflicts in our region.

While we commend the OAU/African Union and subregional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community for the role they are playing, I must emphasize that CENSAD too has effectively contributed to those efforts. It has been able to assist the international community in the prevention and even the resolution of conflicts in CENSAD's geographical area and has taken a number of initiatives in that regard. We have already had the honour of informing the Secretariat and the Security Council of those initiatives.

Allow me to mention a few of the initiatives CENSAD has taken. First, with respect to the Central African Republic, CENSAD has made efforts at all levels since the beginning of the crisis in that country. It sent a delegation consisting of the Secretary for African Unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Foreign Ministers of Burkina Faso and Chad and a representative of the Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU. The delegation met the concerned parties of the Central African Republic and of neighbouring countries. The meetings were attended by the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, General Lamine Cissé.

CENSAD Foreign Ministers held a meeting in New York on 15 November 2001, during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and took several decisions to ease the situation in the Central African Republic. Most important among those decisions was to mandate the Chairman of CENSAD, Sudan, to convene a mini-summit for the concerned parties with a view to resolving the dispute. The results reached at the ministerial meeting were reported promptly to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

In implementation of that decision, the Republic of the Sudan, in its capacity as Chairman of CENSAD, called for a mini-summit meeting, which was held in Khartoum on 3 December 2001, attended by the President of the Republic of Zambia, the Chairman of the OAU, the President of the Republic of Chad, the President of the Central African Republic, and Brigadier Abubaker Yunis, Secretary of the Provisional People's Committee for Defence in Libya. The mini-summit was also attended by the Secretary-General of the OAU, by the Secretary-General of CENSAD and by Mr. Lamine Cissé, the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic.

The summit took decisions on the following matters: the formation of a peacekeeping, security and stabilization force in Central Africa and an appeal to the United Nations, the OAU and friendly countries to provide all forms of assistance to that force; the formation of a political committee, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the Sudan, Chad, Libya, Burkina Faso and Gabon, the Secretary-General of the OAU, the Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of CENSAD, to continue contacts aiming at the achievement of national reconciliation in the Central African Republic; the establishment of a financial fund for the provision of urgent support to the Central African Republic, with contributions from CENSAD member States, other States, and regional and international organizations; a CENSAD request to President Patassé to consider declaring a general amnesty; and an expression of welcome to the call by the Government of the Central African Republic to dissidents to return to their homeland.

The Tripoli summit of March 2002 welcomed the recommendations of the Khartoum mini-summit and reaffirmed CENSAD's commitment to following up the process of peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction in the Central African Republic. Furthermore, the summit declared its readiness to join the efforts of the United Nations, the OAU, the Economic and Social Council and the Central African

Economic and Monetary Community, and established a joint committee to that purpose.

With respect to reconciliation between the Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad, thanks to the efforts of the chairmanship of CENSAD, a bilateral meeting was held between the Presidents of the Central African Republic and of Chad in the capital of Chad in April 2002, in which full reconciliation was reached between the two countries. Borders were reopened, and a committee was established under the chairmanship of the Secretary for African Unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and with membership including the Foreign Minister of Chad, the Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic and the Representative of the Secretary-General, General Cissé. The goal of the committee is to restore and normalize relations between the two countries.

With respect to the situation in Somalia, CENSAD has made, both at the level of member States and at the level of its chairmanship, several efforts for national reconciliation within the CENSAD community. Other attempts have been made to put an end to tensions between Somalia and its neighbours. In this respect, the last summit conference, held in Tripoli in March 2002, expressed support for the Transitional National Government in its efforts aiming at the rehabilitation and restructuring of Somalia. The summit extended a call to the whole international community and to the United Nations and the OAU, in particular, to consolidate efforts to enhance dialogue in the pursuit of national reconciliation and permanent peace in Somalia.

CENSAD members have long been working to bring about national reconciliation in Sudan. The Tripoli summit requested the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Arab Republic of Egypt to continue their efforts with regard to the joint Egyptian-Libyan initiative, which has been accepted by all parties. The summit also recommended that the initiative be coordinated with the IGAD initiative. It also recommended the establishment of a suitable mechanism for the implementation of the peace plan and for supporting the efforts of the Government of Sudan aimed at achieving peace, national reconciliation and stability in the country.

With respect to the strengthening of peace and dialogue in Chad, on 4 January 2002 the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya hosted a meeting between a delegation of the Chadian Government led by the Minister of the Interior and General Security and a delegation representing the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad. The meeting resulted in the signing of a peace agreement between the two parties.

It is clear from those initiatives that regional and subregional organizations play an important and effective role and contribute positively to maintaining peace and security in the area and that they strive to create a favourable political and economic climate, as well as playing an important role in assisting the United Nations in such endeavours.

The deterioration of economic and living conditions in many African countries is a major cause of the emergence, persistence and flaring up of conflicts in their many forms. These economic conditions increase tension. The heavy external debt burden of African countries and the unjust conditions imposed on many African countries by international financial institutions exacerbate the already deteriorated economic situation in their countries, making them vulnerable to dissension and instability.

Cognizant of these facts, CENSAD member States have given them priority within the comprehensive framework of conflict resolution and crisis management, because there can be no peace with poverty. Taking these realities into account, the Khartoum CENSAD summit decided to establish a special fund to assist the Central African Republic, to which all States members of the Community will contribute, despite their dire economic conditions.

The Community calls upon the United Nations, its agencies, and donor countries to give these African issues the attention they deserve, if conflict prevention and resolution efforts are to succeed in the continent.

Despite the Community's efforts, Africa's problems are so numerous and complex that the regional and subregional organizations cannot implement successful and sustainable solutions on their own. The United Nations and the Security Council must therefore take a leading role in supporting these initiatives. We, at the level of our organization, will assist them in fulfilling their roles. However, this requires financial resources to enable the countries Members of the Organization to be in a better position to play a more effective role in the establishment of stability, peace and security in this region.

The Security Council's establishment of its ad hoc Working Group on Africa was an important step towards the implementation of Security Council resolutions on the settlement of disputes in the continent. Furthermore, it will consider ways and means for enabling the Council to take the steps necessary to prevent conflicts from breaking out in some countries. On this occasion we wish to welcome the Working Group's approach to cooperation, consultation and coordination with regional and subregional organizations in our continent. In this regard, we express our readiness to coordinate, consult and cooperate with the Working Group in order to establish the appropriate procedural mechanisms for the maintenance of peace and security in the continent and for the provision of appropriate solutions to the issues that fall within the scope of the region.

While recognizing potential risks involved, we believe that there are initiatives that can be taken by the Security Council. However, we are all prepared to share in assuming that risk so that both the international community and our Community can intervene at the right moment to eliminate areas of tension before the tension escalates and spreads to other areas. Should that occur, containment would be riskier, most costly and more difficult. It is not necessary to cite examples, as such areas of tension are well known to all.

I wish to emphasize once again, on behalf of CENSAD, our readiness to cooperate, coordinate and participate in resolving the issues that fall within the scope of our Community. We also reaffirm that our commitment does not exempt the Security Council from assuming its responsibilities in this regard, as called for by the Charter of the United Nations.

Once again, we express our highest consideration to you, Mr. Minister and President, for holding this important meeting.

The President: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Let me, like others, thank you very much indeed, Sir, for convening this meeting today. Let me also, like others, acknowledge the splendid work of Ambassador Koonjul. I should acknowledge the very helpful contributions of Ambassador Ibrahima Fall and the presence of Ambassador Šimonović too, but in the interest of brevity, let me stop heaping even more deserved praise on all of you.

As the Secretary-General has said, there is no mission that is more important to fulfilling the vision of the Charter than conflict prevention and recovery. In that context, let me make three brief points today, which I hope may in some way be helpful to the Working Group.

My first point is that successful conflict prevention and recovery must draw on political, security, economic and regional perspectives. The challenge, and also the promise, is to integrate those perspectives so as to develop comprehensive responses. We need a deeper understanding of how poverty, poor governance and conflict feed off each other. We also need to know how to encourage virtuous cycles, where peace and sustainable development are mutually supporting.

Focused and well-structured interaction between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as others have said, each bringing its own perspectives, can be an important part of an integrated international response to conflict. In that respect, Australia will encourage this during our term on the Economic and Social Council.

My second point — and a very welcome one — is that with the growing understanding of the causes and cures of conflict, it has to be said that our policy toolbox is fuller than it once was. For example, appreciation of the economic factors sustaining conflicts has enabled a more effective international response to the scourge of conflict diamonds, including through the Kimberley Process, in which Australia is deeply engaged. Transitional justice issues are also receiving more attention, and Australia has been active in its support for international tribunals. But caution is needed. Conflict prevention and recovery remain very inexact sciences. It is important, therefore, to encourage more local input, local knowledge and local ownership. African-driven initiatives and processes, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, must be supported.

Not only do we have more tools, we have also been improving the tools we have. United Nations peacekeeping, in particular, has made substantial progress and must continue to do so. Here, I should say that Australia has what we regard as a proud history of peacekeeping in Africa, including in Rwanda, Somalia, Namibia, Western Sahara, Mozambique and Ethiopia/ Eritrea.

Finally, conflict prevention and recovery in Africa must be a partnership, we believe, between the region and the wider international community. I am happy to say that Australia is a willing and engaged partner. We are, for example, working closely with Nigeria and South Africa at the highest levels of our Governments through the Commonwealth in relation to the recent election in Zimbabwe in order to engage with Zimbabwe on issues of democracy and governance following the unsatisfactory conduct of the recent presidential election.

We recognize that development assistance plays a direct and practical role in promoting peace and overcoming conflict. This year, Australia will adopt a new policy on peace, conflict and development cooperation. Delivering an aid programme that adopts a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and recovery will be a major priority in the coming years. We have a modest but targeted development assistance programme for Africa. A major priority is poverty reduction through capacity-building, governance and the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is an immediate and long-term threat to development and security. Education is another priority, which includes supporting the African Virtual University initiative in Nairobi in cooperation with the World Bank.

The President: Before giving the floor to the representative of Spain, let me inform members that in his letter to the Presidency, when he requested participation in this debate, he also informed us that following his introductory remarks, he would like to give the floor to Mr. Hans Dahlgren, Special Representative of the Presidency of the European Union to the countries of the Mano River Union.

I call on the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey and Liechtenstein, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) expresses its appreciation to the Security Council for convening this open debate, which offers a good opportunity to discuss the question of how the international community can work together in a coordinated way in the area of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The European Union welcomes the establishment of the Security Council ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, presided over by Ambassador Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius.

The European Union attaches great importance to partnership and enhanced cooperation between the main bodies of the United Nations, on the one hand, and between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, on the other hand. The Union welcomes the participation and statements made today in the debate by the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in New York, Ambassador Kébé, and the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović.

It is encouraging to see that the consultations between the United Nations and the African Union are now a routine matter and that coordination between these two organizations on conflict prevention and resolution is beginning to take shape. The Union welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of an ad hoc group of the Economic and Social Council on African countries emerging from conflict, since we believe the Economic and Social Council could play an important role in those countries through its coordinating role and responsibility in peace-building and economic and social reconstruction. The Union considers that the establishment of two ad hoc groups on Africa in the Economic and Social Council and in the Security Council will provide an opportunity to enhance the coordination between those two bodies in order to address the challenges of peace-building and to mobilize support for the needs of the African countries emerging from conflict.

Regional and subregional cooperation is also a matter of priority for the Union. We attach great importance to our dialogue with subregional organizations, notably the Southern African

Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). These are important building blocks for African integration and can contribute to securing peace and prosperity in the continent.

On the matter of electoral observation, the European Union is committed to long-term electoral observation in Africa in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which recognizes the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms among its essential elements.

We support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in its objective of creating the conditions for development in Africa. This African-owned and African-led initiative clearly demonstrates that Africa and the EU share the same goals: sustainable economic growth and development, poverty eradication, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, investment in human resources, the fight against corruption and conflict prevention and resolution. We look forward to the G-8 summit to be held in June in Canada and to the African summit to be held in Durban in early July.

The Union is ready to work towards a unified framework of action by the United Nations system and the international community, based on a rationalization of existing initiatives. In that regard, the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, scheduled for September 2002, will provide an opportunity to assess the role that the United Nations and the international community have played in supporting Africa's priorities, including a comprehensive review of initiatives on Africa. We note that preparations are under way for a new ad hoc working group to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly.

I have the honour now to yield the floor to Mr. Hans Dahlgren, the Special Representative of the EU Presidency for the Mano River Union countries.

Mr. Dahlgren: I can think of no better example of both the opportunities and the difficulties of conflict prevention than what is happening right now in the countries of the Mano River Union — Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In Sierra Leone, its entire people deserve to be congratulated upon last week's historic elections. The elections mark the end of a decade of the most gruesome domestic strife, and they took place basically freely, fairly and transparently in a non-violent environment. President Kabbah should also be congratulated on his decisive election victory; this will make it so much easier for him to continue the consolidation of peace and democracy through national reconciliation and through governing in an inclusive manner.

But also the United Nations and the Security Council deserve ample credit. Through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), almost 50,000 combatants have been disarmed and demobilized, and the United Nations troops have provided peace and security in Sierra Leone. That is good for the people of that country, but it is also a success story that is good for the United Nations. That success deserves to be sustained and must be sustained. Most of the weapons may be gone, but the country needs help to rebuild its infrastructure, its schools, its clinics and its roads. Only a fraction of what we are now spending every year on UNAMSIL would be a great help for the future rebuilding of Sierra Leone. And, equally important, peace and security will remain in Sierra Leone only if the region is stable. Conflict prevention will not succeed if fighting in neighbouring States threatens to spill over.

I suggest that one could focus on three elements to achieve regional stability in the Mano River Union — three concrete steps for conflict prevention. The first step is to build confidence through political dialogue at the highest level. One summit, organized by King Mohammed of Morocco, has already taken place in Rabat in late February. Hopefully, another one will soon take place. A good set of confidence-building measures has already been agreed upon. The European Union is ready to see how we can support their implementation, together with the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We recognize the important contribution made by the Mano River Women's Peace Network in these efforts.

A second element could be to find regional solutions to reverse the destructive trend of conflict and tension. This means finding joint solutions among all three States on dealing with the disarmament and demobilization of combatants; solutions to stop the illegal flows of small arms and light weapons; solutions to help reintegrate the hundreds of thousands

of refugees who have fled. The European Union hopes to work closely with the new United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar, to promote such solutions.

A third element could be to build a democratic culture in all three countries to support peace-building activities that involve the entire population, to build a culture of peace, as someone said in this debate. Sierra Leone has shown what can be done. We would like to see the same basic democratic values reflected when Guinea and Liberia prepare for their elections. That also means involving civil society groups, including political parties, in a fair and open dialogue on the future of each country.

Our immediate attention these days may be focused on the crisis in Liberia. Again, fighting there has caused tens of thousands of innocent people to move, becoming internally displaced or refugees in other States. Immense human suffering has followed. There is obviously a clear need to get the warring parties to talk to each other and stop fighting. There is no military solution to this crisis either. And, therefore, last week's ECOWAS initiative to offer instant mediation is a welcome first step. In the long run, of course, Liberia also needs a process of national reconciliation with all stakeholders involved.

The international community showed courage at a critical time for Sierra Leone. It accepted the challenge to help provide stability. If you travel now to any of the villages in Sierra Leone, you can see how people have returned to their deserted homes. You can see how they rejoice at being able to live normal lives again. Then you can understand how wise that commitment was.

In order not to risk all that has been achieved in Sierra Leone it would be equally wise to work together towards conflict prevention in the entire Mano River region. That is a primary responsibility of the Security Council. It is an important assignment on the agenda of the ad hoc Working Group, and the European Union is ready to play its role in that joint effort.

The President: Before inviting the next speaker to take the floor, let me announce that I intend to suspend this meeting at around 1.30 p.m.

I now call on the representative of Djibouti, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): Let me first express my greetings to you, Mr. President. I am very delighted to see you chairing this meeting today, thus underscoring the importance that Singapore attaches to Africa in general and to the prevention and resolution of conflict in Africa in particular. Our congratulations go also to Ambassador Mahbubani and to his efficient and capable staff, with whom we enjoy the best of relations.

May I also pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for steering the ad hoc Working Group into action. I truly commend him for his earnest attempts to cooperate, liaise and contribute with respect to all issues of interest to us, specifically African issues.

I would also like to echo fully and endorse the sincere sentiments expressed by Ambassador Kébé towards Mr. Fall. Mr. Fall has been a pillar of moderation and a source of wise counsel. This morning he made an eloquent statement that was clear testimony to his insightful appreciation of African issues.

Perhaps the heart of the matter and why we are here again today in a public meeting on the situation in Africa is contained in the second paragraph of Ambassador Koonjul's letter of 10 January 2002 addressed to the Council President, who happened to be himself at that time (S/2002/46). Here Ambassador Koonjul observed that the Council had been dealing with almost all the conflict situations in Africa, but, unfortunately, we are not getting the desired overall results.

It is proposed therefore that the issues be revisited, attention be refocused on Africa, a proactive approach for the continent be devised and a workable set of recommendations be worked out. We have the 31 January statement laying out in concrete terms the framework for Council actions, which resulted in the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group, which has already elaborated its programme of work, which is the basis for this meeting today.

The analysis of the root causes of the conflicts in Africa has occupied this Council for too long, but it took a dramatic turn with the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318). For the first time, the links between the conflicts in Africa and, inter alia, poverty and development were clearly spelled out. In other words, the problems have been identified and solutions have been proposed. What remains to be done

has always been to put these recommendations into practice and to gather the resources necessary to guarantee their success, of course always trying to put in place the structures and mechanisms to promote their implementation.

In this respect, we welcome the programme of work proposed by the ad hoc Working Group. Some of the issues identified are technical in nature; some call for strengthening and enhancing coordination as well as consultation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations; and some require further inputs in clarifying the roles and relationships of certain actors.

While all this merits discussion, as should be the case — and I do concur with the inputs outlined by colleagues who preceded me this morning — I would also like to draw the attention of the Council to the broader and larger question that needs a frank and honest response: why does the situation persist despite all the initiatives and efforts to tackle the pernicious issues of conflict situations in Africa?

Among the broader issues that require focus and commitment, in our view, is the inability to adopt effective, timely and necessary measures to deal with conflict situations in Africa. Where there is intervention after a lapse of time, mandates and resources available for the operations are not consonant with the requirements of the situation. Where the strategic, political and economic importance of a conflict is deemed significant to some parties, usually a movement towards early action is discernible. Certain conflicts, however, are left to take their own course. With that inaction, incalculable loss of lives and destruction are experienced, and it takes years and generations to overcome the attendant stagnation and decay of economic activities.

I am raising these broader but core issues because there is a certain sense of déjà-vu with regard to the propensity to meet, discuss and analyse Africa's condition. Both the Council and the General Assembly have thoroughly examined the 1998 definitive report of the Secretary-General. The implementation of the recommendations, however, has been indecisive and slow, particularly in light of African expectations.

This brings us to another question in the context of addressing broader issues. Can the Council be even-handed in addressing all conflicts in the world, but particularly African conflicts?

Finally, we hope that we may be near the point where talk, analysis and proposals are concluded, and that we move on to vigorous, comprehensive and meaningful measures, instituted in coordination with the OAU, African subregions, the donor community and the Economic and Social Council in order to combine the experiences, capabilities and resources of all concerned for the benefit of the lives of people crying for help.

The President: I thank the representative of Djibouti for the kind words addressed to my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): We welcome you, Sir, to the Council and would like to convey our deep appreciation of the fine contribution that Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and his dedicated team have been making to the work of Council. Your delegation's web site for its work in the Council presidency merits commendation. We hope that it will serve as an example for other delegations, including ours. We would also like to congratulate Ambassador Lavrov for his stewardship of the Council during a particularly demanding period last month.

We would like to place on record our appreciation of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul for the work done by the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. Mauritius, a beacon of peace, democracy, harmony and prosperity, is a shining example not just for Africa, but for the rest of the world. We are confident that under Ambassador Koonjul's guidance the Working Group will make a significant contribution to the work of the United Nations, especially that of the Council, towards resolving conflicts in Africa.

At the Security Council's open meeting on 29 January 2002, we made a detailed statement sharing our perspective of what needs to be done for promoting peace and resolving conflicts in Africa. We shall therefore focus on only some of the issues that have been listed in the guidelines.

There is the matter of enhancing economic coordination with the Economic and Social Council. While economic and social aspects may have a bearing on peace and security, the interface between these two

elements, which are dealt with by the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council respectively, should be coordinated by the General Assembly, the highest intergovernmental body of the United Nations, to which both the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council report. Further, the modalities of cooperation between these two bodies need to be first discussed within each so as not to repeat the situation that occurred last year when efforts to hold a meeting between the two Council's had to be aborted. We understand that as yet there is no agreement in the Economic and Social Council on the modalities of cooperation with the Security Council, and that the Economic and Social Council has also not yet set up an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict.

In our view, this issue needs further in-depth, thorough examination, keeping in view the roles of the two bodies as enshrined in the Charter. Post-conflict peace-building does not fall within the purview of the Security Council, but lies with other bodies and organs of the United Nations which are better placed to deal with this task. As and when these bodies require the involvement and the cooperation of the Security Council, they would invite it.

With regard to confidence-building in the region of the Mano River Union, we welcome the Secretary General's decision to establish the United Nations Regional Office in West Africa. We are confident that under the able stewardship of Mr. Ibrahima Fall the Office will be able to contribute to the efforts of the Mano River Union countries as well as other subregional groups to prevent and resolve conflicts in the region.

On the subject of election observation, we agree that free and fair elections are crucial for promoting and strengthening democracies. As the largest democracy in the world, we are fully committed to the democratic ideal. Indeed, election observation, where requested by the concerned State, contributes to confidence in the electoral process, particularly in nascent democracies. The antithesis of elections is usurping power by overthrowing elected governments. By its presidential statement S/PRST/2002/2 of 31 January 2002, the Council expressed its strong support for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decision to deny recognition to Governments that come to power through unconstitutional means. Before the Council indulges in assisting in election observation, it must, in line with its position articulated in the statement of 31 January 2002, take a very clear and categorical position against military coups and unconstitutional changes in the Governments, no matter where they occur. Embracing military dictators and considering them to be a part of a solution, rather than the problem that they truly are, sends a very wrong message.

Regarding the establishment of a group of friends for specific conflict situations, we agree that this is a useful modality that can play a positive role provided such a group is the genuine friend of all the parties to the conflict and enjoys their confidence as a legitimate interlocutor. Otherwise, the group would be seen as taking sides or interfering and would not serve the cause of peace, but only complicate the situation further.

As far as cooperation with OAU and subregional organizations, we fully support the idea that the ad hoc Working Group should establish close links with OAU and subregional organizations. In fact, we would like to take this opportunity to applaud the work done by the OAU and many subregional groups of Africa with limited resources and, often, without political and financial support from outside. However, the maintenance of international peace and security is first and foremost the responsibility of the Council, from which there should be no derogation in the name of burden-sharing or division of work. The Council must not transfer its responsibility or take a back seat.

Regarding invitations to representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities and academia in the work of the Group, we agree that NGOs and civil society can play an important role. We do recognise this, and we support and encourage them. But experience has shown that this works mainly in the economic and social fields and in respect of humanitarian assistance. Maintenance of peace and security is far more complex and, by definition, more difficult and mostly beyond their capacity. This is a responsibility which devolves primarily on States or intergovernmental organizations. However, if the Working Group considers the need to draw on the expertise of civil society in some specific areas, we would not object.

Let me now come to a couple of areas that appear to have been missed and which the Council may consider adding to the programme of work of the ad

hoc Working Group. While there have been references to inviting components of civil society to participate in the work of the Working Group, there is no reference to participation by non-members of the Council. This must have been an inadvertent omission, as it could not have been the intention of the Council to give civil society a role more prominent than non-members in its subsidiary organs. With this understanding, we believe that the Council should now invite non-members to participate in the work of other subsidiary bodies as a matter of course. We welcome this as an additional element in demonstrating transparency in the work of the Council and commend this refreshing approach.

In the presidential statement of 31 January 2002, the Council, bearing in mind the linkages between conflicts in Africa and the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, reaffirmed its continued commitment to addressing this problem. We do hope that a clear and sharp focus will be given to this issue by the ad hoc Working Group, as much devastation and loss of life has been caused by illicit arms and weapons. The Council must come out strongly against illicit arms traffickers and countries that either facilitate this trade or turn a blind eye towards it. It must also take resolute action against the supply of arms and weapons to non-State actors.

We share the feeling of many African and other members of the United Nations that the Council does not give the same attention or devote the same level of resources to addressing African issues as compared to problems elsewhere or where the interests of some Council members are involved. This needs to be addressed seriously, sincerely and squarely. The message must go out to African countries that, for the Council, Africa's problems are as important as, if not more important than, other problems before the Council. We support the work of the ad hoc Working Group, which has the potential to substantially contribute to promoting peace and resolving conflicts in Africa. Its focus, therefore, should be on actions that are within the mandate of the Council, so that its recommendations can be acted upon by the Council expeditiously.

The President: I thank the representative of India for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, my appreciation to you, Sir, for convening this debate and for giving non-members of the Security Council, particularly countries from Africa, an opportunity to speak on the working methods of the ad hoc Working Group. I would also like to thank Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his briefing on the activities of the Working Group; and Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council; Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for their very informative statements.

Convinced that world stability and prosperity will not prevail in the 21st century unless the problems of Africa are resolved, the Government of Japan has addressed the situation in Africa as one of the most important foreign policy issues for Japan. From that standpoint, I would like today to discuss three points with respect to the activities of the Working Group.

The first point concerns the enhancement of cooperation with the Economic and Social Council, as indicated in the mandate of the Working Group. We have stressed that for effective conflict prevention it is imperative to take a comprehensive approach that integrates political, economic, social and humanitarian measures based on requirements from moment to moment. Such approach should be applied to all steps, from conflict prevention to post-conflict peacemaking. Furthermore, it goes without saying that it is important to ensure cooperation and coordination among the entities engaged in conflict prevention. To achieve lasting solutions to the conflicts in Africa, it is again necessary to take a comprehensive approach that envisions not only traditional peacekeeping operations, but also the observation of elections and the demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as post-conflict assistance for reconstruction and development. I believe such a comprehensive approach requires well-coordinated cooperation between the work of the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and that of the Economic and Social Council, whose function is to make recommendations to the General Assembly, the United Nations Member States and the specialized agencies concerned with international economic and

social problems. I therefore welcome the fact that the Working Group is focusing on this issue.

As referred to in the programme of the Working Group, the Economic and Social Council is now carefully considering the possible establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on emerging conflicts in African countries in order to encourage the international community to extend its support during the transition from peacekeeping to peacemaking. Although the Economic and Social Council has not yet concluded its work, it is important to avoid any duplication of work by the two groups. Thus, if such advisory group is in fact established, it should co-organize meetings with the Working Group and jointly propose ways of bridging the gap between emergency relief activities during a conflict, and reconstruction and development assistance once a conflict has been resolved. In doing so, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could together present an entire roadmap for conflict resolution and the achievement of lasting peace.

The second point I would like to raise concerns the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was initiated by the African countries themselves. As preconditions for development, NEPAD stresses such aspects as the importance of prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacemaking; post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction; and issues relating to small arms and demining. That approach coincides with the comprehensive approach I have just described. I look forward to a constructive dialogue between the Working Group and the Organization of African Unity/ African Union on this issue.

My third point concerns the transparency of the Working Group's activities. Although the Group is essentially an informal body, in focusing on measures to deal with a post-conflict situation while a conflict is coming to a resolution, it could benefit from input by non-members of the Security Council that have the experience and ability to play a major role in post-conflict reconstruction and development assistance. In that sense, we consider today's debate quite useful, and we hope that interested non-members of the Security Council will be briefed on its activities, if possible, at each meeting of the Group.

The international situation continues to be extremely tenuous owing in large part to the political and economic impact of the terrorist attacks in the United States last September. But even under such circumstances, the international community needs to strengthen its joint efforts to resolve the conflicts that Africa is now facing. The international community must provide proactive and continuous support for the ownership efforts initiated by African countries themselves.

At the end of 2003, the Government of Japan expects to convene the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Designating the year or so leading up to that event as the Year for Soaring Cooperation with Africa, the Government of Japan will take concrete measures further to enhance Japan's policies towards Africa.

In closing, let me express our hope that, under the leadership of Ambassador Koonjul, the Working Group will achieve positive results contributing to the efforts of the international community, including those of Japan.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of Council members, I shall suspend the meeting now and resume it at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 1.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4538 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4538th meeting

Wednesday, 22 May 2002, 4 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-39516 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 4.05 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Malaysia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Da Fonseca (Cape Verde), Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic), Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia) and Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I would like to thank the Security Council, and in particular you yourself, Sir, for organizing today's debate and for inviting Sierra Leone to participate in it, and to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over such an important meeting.

Our appreciation also goes to the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group, the Ambassador of Mauritius, for his initiative.

Since this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor since the election of the new members of the Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — we would also like to salute their election and to wish them all success in the fulfilment of their arduous mandate.

Today's debate certainly attests to the Security Council's commitment to seeking long-term solutions to the problems of Africa. The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa — which was considered by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — contains a series of specific as well as broad recommendations on issues ranging from post-conflict peace-building to the mobilization of resources for development. We also salute the importance of the follow-up work of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

The causes and solutions to conflicts in African countries are nearly always linked to a wider, regional problem of instability. The Council needs to maintain its attention, as it has done in the past, on the overall regional problems. West Africa, in particular, is a region where the intricate net of individual conflicts, fed by poverty, has heightened the risk of the region becoming the world's first failed region.

Sierra Leone has preoccupied the Council over the past few years, but today I can assure you that, thanks to the constant involvement of the United Nations, the Sierra Leonean people have been given hope. The imminent establishment of the Special Court and the peacefully held presidential and legislative elections are testimony enough to encourage the Council to further support the peace process.

However, as long as the situation in neighbouring countries, such as Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, remains dire, the threat of instability spilling back into Sierra Leone is still very real. Equally, the huge number of refugees and internally displaced persons still on the move in a number of countries in West Africa troubles us.

In that sense, it has always been our view that the efforts of subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter are absolutely essential and that cooperation should be given a very practical focus. Indeed, the subregional organization's efforts must continue to be enhanced. The Council should not, however, concentrate only on conflict. It ought to properly integrate all the economic, social and political problems that create conflict and poverty.

Sierra Leone wishes to acknowledge the support provided for certain African initiatives to resolve disputes. In this respect, we would like to pay tribute to the United Nations Development Program for its contribution to the Mano River Women's Peace Network.

Another example is the work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women towards gender

mainstreaming in its peace programme in East Africa, Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, facilitating women's participation in peace and reconciliation meetings and negotiations, and supporting their involvement in advocacy for peace. We strongly encourage its further development in the rest of the African region.

The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa highlighted the critical nexus between peace and development and advanced a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. That approach has been accepted by the international community, including African countries themselves, as a framework for the provision of support to Africa.

Indeed, Sierra Leone, based on its own painful experience, confirms that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development in any African country.

One of the elements contributing to violent conflict in Africa is the rapid accumulation, illicit sale and indiscriminate use of small arms, which aggravate conflict situations. Indeed, in Sierra Leone, the illicit trade in arms and diamonds has shown to be a major element fuelling the conflict.

An effective way for the United Nations to assist African countries in the area of peace-building is to combine measures in support of peace-building and longer-term development in a comprehensive and coherent response. A critical element of forging national reconciliation and social cohesion is to promote a culture of peace, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has a leading role in that field. We can only agree with the importance of disseminating the culture of peace among parliamentarians and members of the armed and police forces as well, in particular when many of them were ex-combatants and joined a reintegration programme.

The public service is weak in a country that has experienced years of civil war, not to say sometimes non-existent, and strengthening those countries' capacity is one of the critical contributions that the United Nations — especially this Working Group — can make in assisting these countries to direct and manage their own development. The work of the Economic Commission for Africa in enhancing the administrative capacity of African countries is commendable.

Building the capacity required for the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions is also of crucial importance.

The importance of creating small- and medium-sized enterprises in Africa in order to increase the employment prospects of the underemployed and unemployed needs to be given continued attention.

While special school feeding programmes are very positive initiatives that help both boy and girl students to learn in better conditions, special efforts are still needed to get more girls to enter school and to improve their attendance, thereby eliminating a form of discrimination.

In conclusion, the Sierra Leone delegation wishes to emphasize again its belief that the regional approach to the prevention and resolution of conflicts is an efficient one that requires thorough cooperation with the subregional and international community.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Gambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Grey-Johnson (Gambia): I congratulate you, Sir, for convening this important meeting, to allow us share our ideas with you on what the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the ad hoc Working Group might do severally and collectively, to more effectively address the problems of peace, security and development in Africa. They are the real challenges that face the continent and the ones on which we feel the United Nations must concentrate if it is to be of meaningful service to African countries. We must also recognize that the problems of peace and security and the problems of development are in fact two sides of the very same coin. That is why we are gratified that the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council have decided to come together to address them jointly. We also know that it is mainly for that reason that it has been decided to set up the United Nations Office for West Africa under the dynamic leadership of Ibrahima Fall, whom we wish well as he takes up his duties in Dakar.

At this very moment, there is jubilation in Sierra Leone for the smooth conduct of presidential and

parliamentary elections, signalling a full transition from conflict to peace and democracy. We extend our congratulations to the Government and people of Sierra Leone. The Security Council also deserves our commendation for the role it played in stabilizing the situation and in getting the warring factions to choose the political rather than the military route in the pursuit of their objectives. We also congratulate the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, as well as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and its dynamic leadership, for staying focused on the ground, despite the adverse odds and many challenges that they faced, and for prosecuting their mandate to a successful outcome in record time — a not-too-common occurrence in United Nations peacekeeping.

I should very quickly like to raise a number of issues that might cut across some of the areas proposed for consideration at this meeting.

Let me start with the situation in the Mano River Union. There is a need for the United Nations perspective on the Mano River question to be broadened in order to realistically address the problem. Accordingly, not only should the offices of the two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Monrovia and in Freetown be rationalized, but also moves should be made to incorporate the Guinean dimensions of the problem into present programmes. Perhaps the time has come for there to be one Representative office for the Mano River Union. An expanded mandate for UNAMSIL along those lines might best meet that need.

On a related matter, I should like to address the issue of mercenaries in West Africa. A large number of mercenaries from all over the subregion have been involved in the conflicts in West Africa. They participated very actively in Sierra Leone and Guinea and are now back in Liberia. There is a need for the United Nations to formally recognize the existence of this group of actors in the various conflicts, with a view to designing and implementing appropriate programmes to address them as an important factor in our search for a durable peace in the subregion. At present nothing is being done to demobilize them, as was the case with the combatants in Sierra Leone. In fact, we have evidence to show that when the situation calmed down in Sierra Leone many of the mercenaries fighting with the RUF moved over into Liberia to join the various militias in the fighting that picked up recently in that country. When this conflict does come to an end, is it not likely that this army of mercenaries will move over to another country in the subregion to ply its trade? My Government has been drawing attention to this problem for a long time now and would sincerely wish that something be done without any further delay to address it.

We firmly believe that the United Nations, perhaps along with ECOWAS, must take up this issue seriously. It must first begin by finding out who these people are, how many of them there are, where they came from, who recruited them and for what purpose. Then the United Nations should proceed to design appropriate interventions to have them effectively demobilized and eventually fully reintegrated into their various communities. These interventions should include a more concerted effort to deny them and the militias they fight for access to the arms that keep them in business. In this regard, arms manufacturers and exporters in the West should be held more to account and be made to be more selective, more judgmental and more responsive in their arms and ammunition transactions with African buyers.

The time has come for United Nations peacekeeping to be more proactive so as to prevent conflicts before they flare up. At present the United Nations appears more equipped to react to conflict situations, much like closing the doors after the horses have left the stables. The case of Guinea a couple of years ago amply demonstrates this shortcoming. Although everyone knew for many months before it happened that Guinea was poised to fall victim to rebel attack, there were no perceptible efforts on the part of the United Nations to prevent that from happening. The current situation in Madagascar, and the Security Council's reaction to it, is another good case in point. At present, there are many countries throughout Africa that are displaying all the signs of a flare-up. The United Nations must strengthen its ability to keep a close watch on those countries and to intervene in order to reduce, and eventually, diffuse the existing tensions.

As part of its peacekeeping activities, the United Nations should seek to encourage and support initiatives by individual Member States to prevent or resolve conflicts. It is true that the United Nations supported the intervention of ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It should strengthen its partnership with that intergovernmental organization, as well as with others, such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan

States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and so on. It should show solidarity with them and increase their confidence and capacity to handle conflict in their respective areas.

Equally, bilateral initiatives taken by certain States to address conflict situations in their neighbourhood deserve to be supported in concrete ways. For example, my country's peace programmes for Guinea-Bissau and for Cassamance in southern Senegal could be significantly bolstered, given the many resource constraints that we face, if systematic material and financial support of the United Nations were more forthcoming.

Post-conflict support has been something of an enigma for the United Nations. It would appear that in many cases, we seem to be in a hurry to move out, once there are signs that the conflict may be coming to an end. The Central African Republic some years ago is a good case in point. I know that there are those who would be in a hurry to begin pulling the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) out of Sierra Leone, now that a smooth transition from conflict to democracy has been made in that country. That would be a grave error. Post-conflict Governments must be assisted with confidence-building measures, as well as with the requisite deterrents, to ensure that the situation does not slide back into chaos. Peacekeeping mandates should, therefore, not cease with the cessation of hostilities. Rather, they should be sustained well into peacetime and be adjusted as necessary to fit the prevailing circumstances and needs for sustainability in each country.

Finally, post-conflict interventions must include strong capacity-building programmes. Typically, countries emerging from conflict are left with significantly weakened capacities. Institutions are destroyed and human resources are decimated. Perhaps the greatest damage done to a country in conflict is the erosion of its skills base through the brain drain — the flight of skilled people. Whereas physical infrastructure can be rebuilt in a relatively short period of time, replacing lost skills requires a lot of time. The absence of that vital input very often stalls recovery and frustrates development. Perhaps the Economic and Social Council should come up with innovative measures to replace the large pool of skilled manpower lost to African countries, not only as a result of conflict, but also as a consequence of the adverse economic conditions prevailing in many parts of the continent. Technical cooperation among developing countries may be one way to address the need. Another would be a focused programme of assisted voluntary return to bring back the many professionals and highly skilled people who have left the African continent and now live in the West.

These were the few points I wanted to contribute to this discussion.

The President: I call on the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Tunisian delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for planning and presided over this formal meeting of the Security Council devoted to Africa.

I also wish to congratulate Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, for his commitment to Africa. We are convinced that, thanks to his professional and human qualities, the work of this Group will be crowned with success.

My delegation supports the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Of course, the statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 January 2002 contains very interesting recommendations and suggestions that pave the way for the future action of the Working Group. We also believe that the activities of the Group should be part of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable peace and development in Africa. The analysis and the recommendations in that report are still very relevant four years later.

While expressing our gratitude for the document that was prepared in order to facilitate this discussion, allow me to stress the following points.

We attach great importance to cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Their participation in the Security Council meeting held on 29 January 2002 on the situation in Africa shows how beneficial the interaction between these two main organs of the United Nations is when we are talking about the maintenance of international peace and security in their political, economic and social dimensions, which themselves generate development within a context of stability.

Cooperation and interaction between these two organs can fit perfectly into efforts to prevent armed conflicts and to build peace before and after conflicts.

In the course of its presidency of the Council in February 2001, Tunisia suggested for the Council a discussion on peace-building, being convinced that peace is not simply the absence of armed conflicts or declared hostility. Peace is rather something that has to be built, with the combined efforts of all United Nations bodies, in order to establish with foresight the foundations for peace or to build peace following a conflict.

I would like to express our support for the establishment of an Economic and Social Council advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and express the hope that the Security Council ad hoc Working Group will cooperate closely with the Economic and Social Council advisory group.

The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General play a very important role when it comes to preventing conflicts and also in the field of peace-building. Often placed at the head of support offices of the United Nations for peace-building, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General already have a certain number of achievements to their credit. These include support given to Governments to build peace, fostering national reconciliation, strengthening democratic institutions, providing a framework to harmonize the United Nations peace-building activities in the field and facilitating the mobilization of international political support. There is also the collection of arms and assistance for their destruction, and facilitating communication between Governments, neighbouring States, regional organizations and bilateral donors. Within this context, my delegation supports the adoption of new institutional arrangements, with a view to making the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa more effective.

Regional and subregional organizations have an important role to play in the area of conflict prevention and peace-building after conflicts. Chapter VIII of the Charter provides an ideal framework for cooperation and coordination between the regional organizations and the United Nations, in particular the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Because of their geographic proximity and their better knowledge of the unique situations that they cover, regional organizations could be a rapid early warning centre for the United Nations. They are sometimes better equipped in order to determine the right time for the Council to act. Most of the conflicts that take place in Africa in this post-cold-war period are domestic conflicts; and thus we feel that it is crucial to strengthen the institutional abilities of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), support its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and help the OAU in the area of training, increasing its participation in United Nations activities and initiatives and promoting joint United Nations-OAU initiatives. Modalities for this cooperation have to be strengthened through the implementation of appropriate strategies in the area of cooperation and permanent mechanisms, including early warning, conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. It is also important to include the subregional organizations, such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is undeniable that these subregional organizations constantly contribute directly to resolving internal conflicts and inter-State conflicts in Africa; and therefore they must be heeded by the Security Council whenever dealing with a conflict or tension in the regions that they represent.

The efforts and initiatives of ECOWAS in the Sierra Leone conflict and in Liberia are well known. The CENSAD has also contributed greatly to resolving the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the internal conflict in the Central African Republic. This regional organization has also undertaken mediation between the Central African Republic and Chad, as well as among the different Somali factions. This experience needs to be acknowledged by the Security Council, as these are mechanisms able to contribute to conflict resolution.

Lastly, we must point out in this context the matter of the lack of resources within the OAU and subregional organizations – namely, when it comes to being able to play their role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. The role of regional organizations can be crucial, especially when it comes to designing exit strategies after peacekeeping operations. Once the conflict is resolved, the long-term plan and peace-building could be entrusted in the field

to subregional mechanisms that the United Nations must assist politically and financially.

Peace depends on economic and social development. Despite the unquestionable progress that we have seen in recent years, the situation in many regions in Africa remains alarming. Africa has not been able to radically break with all matter of ills that still plague it. The continent has the largest number of least developed countries: 34 out of 49. This critical situation is worsened by the burden of a severe debt, low levels of savings and investment, the depreciation of the prices of commodities, reductions in official development aid, as well as insufficient levels of foreign direct investment.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) reflects the Africans' desire to take the future of their continent in hand. NEPAD clearly expresses how Africa, in association with the rest of the world, could finally begin to tackle the enormous challenges that face it. The implementation of NEPAD is of great importance, and we are convinced that, if we want to put an end to the vicious circle of conflicts, violence and instability in Africa, the Working Group must seek to make itself aware of the economic and social causes of conflict whenever it looks at a given situation on the African continent.

It is this relationship between peace, security, stability and development that should, in our opinion, always be at the very basis of every treatment of a conflict in developing countries, and in Africa in particular, where it has been amply shown that every intra-State or inter-State conflict also has economic and social causes and implications. This is a reality with which we have to contend from now on.

Now I would like to quote a wonderful statement by Mohatma Gandhi, who said that "Poverty is the worst form of violence and insecurity". The Security Council has the right and the duty to recall this to the international community.

The President: As I said this morning, it is my intention to allow a Council Member to respond after several non-Council member statements. Accordingly, I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): May I first thank you, Mr. Minister, as other colleagues have, for presiding over our meeting and thank Singapore for convening this important meeting of the Council on Africa. It is important, because, following our earlier meeting in January, a discussion such as this offers to Council members, to the wider United Nations membership, and to the United Nations family of institutions, including the Economic and Social Council, the opportunity to stand back from day-to-day consideration of issues and engage in a genuine dialogue and exchange of views on wider issues and give a strategic focus to the policies we have both in the Council and within the United Nations.

First, before responding to some of the points made in the course of our discussion, I want to warmly thank on behalf of my delegation Ambassador Koonjul for his work in establishing the Council's ad hoc Working Group — a theme picked up by most speakers so far. We have made a very good start in the Working Group. We have a very good programme of work. Over the coming period, I think that the Working Group can bring both focus and richness to the work of the Council in terms of the way we approach issues, but also in terms of a wider sense of engagement with institutions within the United Nations, with African organizations, with the non-governmental organization community and with other actors involved.

I would also like to welcome Ambassador Šimonović, the President of the Economic and Social Council, since it is important that the Security Council, given the extent to which its engagement with African issues is critical to its work, have the chance for partnership and dialogue with the Economic and Social Council.

Therefore, the establishment by the Council of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution and the envisaged Economic and Social Council advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict can play a very important role in partnership with each other. This will be important in bringing an extra dimension to the work of both the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The establishment of both groups will, one hopes, strengthen not just the level of United Nations engagement on African issues but also international engagement.

These themes are important for a number of reasons. I think they came from many speakers this morning because of the critical need for the United Nations, the Council and the international community

generally to focus on Africa and the challenges facing it.

There is a phrase in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on the need for bold and imaginative thinking. This is something on which we in the United Nations, after many years, need to adjust our thinking as we approach issues in Africa. In the context of NEPAD and of new thinking in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and throughout Africa, we need to look again at the way we approach issues of conflict, peacemaking and peace-building to see how we can bring strength and coordination, but also new thinking.

Several speakers have rightly made the point this morning that each situation in Africa is different. The situations in Ethiopia-Eritrea, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as we saw during the Council mission to the Great Lakes region, and Madagascar all have their own particular circumstances, and each therefore calls for a strong emphasis on regional cooperation, not just in the context of the OAU but the subregional organizations.

The Council Working Group — and the same is true, I think, of the Economic and Social Council group — can, in dialogue with the OAU and the regional organizations in Africa, bring an extra dimension of reflective thinking to the situation as we approach it.

Ambassador Dauth of Australia made the point earlier not only that peace and development are two sides of one coin, but also that there is much new thinking. It is reflected in the OAU. It is reflected in the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and our African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners. They have helped bring together security, economic, humanitarian and military issues. We approach the different requirements of regional conflicts in a way that brings together the different dimensions that are needed in addressing the conflict and also the instruments of development cooperation that are later needed to help resolve it and ease tension.

I think there were three or four themes that I did want to look at briefly, because they came out very strongly in the contributions made this morning.

The first is institutional issues. It is clear that one of the weaknesses in the United Nations approach over recent years has been that there has been a failure of partnership at times between the United Nations and the OAU and regional organizations. There is blame on all sides for that, but there is now a very real opportunity in terms of the OAU structures and the new ideas that will be going to Durban that we heard of this morning to look at ways in which we can seriously engage, jointly, in approaching both pre-conflict and conflict situations in Africa. There are various ideas put forward on how to do this: joint missions between the Council and the OAU, the sharing of information and documents, special briefings, joint special envoys, and bringing in subregional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community into this framework.

What is certainly true is that there is very substantial room for working together, and this is an area where the new Council Working Group will be able to play a major role in a way that has not been possible up to now. So when the Council does look at different situations it will do so with deep knowledge of where African countries themselves are coming from and where, as Ambassador Kanu of Sierra Leone just said, we have a serious knowledge of the regional implications and what this means.

The Mano River countries are a very good example where, as several speakers have emphasized, it is very difficult to consider one country — Sierra Leone, for example — in isolation from what is happening in the neighbouring countries. This is true of many of the countries in Africa where conflict or the potential for conflict may exist.

The second point on the institutions is to look at ways of strengthening the mediation capacity of the United Nations, including fact-finding missions and special representatives. We can look at various new mechanisms for doing this, but there is an important requirement to look at new possibilities to add to the range of instruments that the Council and the United Nations have at their disposal.

The point on the Economic and Social Council has already been made strongly by several speakers and is absolutely true. Up to now, over the past 5 to 15 years, as the Council has become increasingly engaged in African issues, it has at times appeared to lack a serious partner and interlocutor on the economic and development side. There were always, of course, the

funds and programmes and specialized agencies, but the importance of the Economic and Social Council in this is to bring that extra dimension of pulling threads together and providing a concept of partnership both to the Council and to the OAU and regional organizations in Africa as to what is possible and the range of actions that can be jointly undertaken.

One point that did come up this morning, raised by Assistant Secretary-General Fall and which I also wanted to mention, is the issue of sanctions. That is an important issue for the Council at the moment, partly because of the number of countries in Africa where there are targeted sanctions in operation through Council action. The point on this, which I think has been made by several speakers this morning, is, first, the need for sanctions not only to be targeted but to be focused so that their humanitarian impact is limited, but also, as Assistant Secretary-General Fall said, so that there is the possibility of an exit strategy when circumstances are appropriate. There is a phrase to the effect that when change is not necessary, it is not necessary to change. That conservative dynamic can sometimes apply to institutions as well.

It is therefore important to remember that when, for political reasons — in terms of the impact of sanctions regionally and on particular countries — and for reasons of justice, a decision has to be taken about sanctions, it should be remembered that, even when applied in a very limited way, sanctions can sometimes be a blunt instrument. There I think the partnership and dialogue that the Working Group and the Economic and Social Council can advance with the OAU and regional organizations would be important.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) makes the point on development issues that the challenge facing Africa in this area is enormous. It is not simply the inability to harness globalization. It is not simply the technology gap that has developed. But, as several speakers have said in our discussion, it is the range of problems such as lack of trade access and, despite the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, the problem of debt. These are two sides of one coin. It is very difficult to address underlying causes of conflict without offering people the opportunity for economic and social development.

Therefore, as is emphasized in NEPAD and has been emphasized by most speakers today, the issue of development, while it is not a direct responsibility of the Council, is of critical importance to Council action in terms of pre-conflict or conflict situations or of peacemaking operations. There the dialogue with the Economic and Social Council will be of critical importance to the work of the Working Group in looking at implications of Council actions on development and vice versa.

The issue is especially important, I think, because one of the themes that struck me during the Council mission to the Great Lakes region was the disconnect between what happens in development and the actions undertaken by the Council. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we had a briefing on the economic and social situation, we heard about the results of the Consolidated Appeals by the United Nations agencies. I think that something like one-sixth of what is required has been provided so far for the current year. That makes it extraordinarily difficult.

On the one hand, you have the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the prospects for disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, and you have the role of the Council in fostering and encouraging peace and dialogue, while on the other hand you have enormous problems of economic and social development. Logically, in terms of action by the United Nations family, these have to be considered as two sides of one coin.

There are two final points that I also want briefly to pick up on. One is arms, which has been emphasized by several speakers. Clearly, in Sierra Leone there is a very good example of this. We need to continue to highlight the importance of disarmament and arms control initiatives in conflict prevention. This is something that in the Working Group we can seriously look at in the period ahead.

The final point is the role of NEPAD, which of course will be considered at the G-9 Summit, at the World Economic Forum in Durban and beyond. The issues at stake with NEPAD are, without exaggeration, of fundamental importance to the future of Africa. They will affect every aspect of policy, of development, of conflict prevention. They will require the closest cooperation and coordination by the international community. They will require the engagement of all United Nations institutions, including the Council in terms of its own role. It will

also require a sense of focus and clarity so that, as African countries themselves put in place structures of cooperation that advance good governance, economic policies in terms of trade, and new codes of action, the international community will respond in a reciprocal way so that the challenge that is now being undertaken by African countries is met fully and adequately by the international community. If it is not, as NEPAD emphasizes, it would be extremely difficult for the people of Africa or African countries to do this on their own.

In conclusion, I think that all the points made this morning emphasize the need for greater focus on partnership and cooperation among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and African regional and subregional organizations, African countries and civil society. But it is also a critical point that in advancing this goal we also need to ensure that, with respect to the development component, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the international donor community are brought together so that, as we tackle challenges in one critical area, we provide the people of Africa and African organizations with the resources to advance both goals at the same time.

The President: I now call on the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me, Sir, to begin by thanking you for presiding over this meeting today. It is no accident that this issue has come before you, because your Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani was a Vice-Chairman of the General Assembly's Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and he did us proud even then.

I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, Chairman of the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa, for the terms of reference and other proposals before us and for his commitment to the issues of African peace and development. It is also gratifying that the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity were also invited to participate in this meeting.

It is realistic to accept that the Security Council will always be faced with issues that are beyond its mandate. My delegation has on previous occasions urged that the Security Council review its relationship with the Economic and Social Council. We are pleased that this effort is continuing, and we remain convinced that how these two main councils of the United Nations work together will go a long way towards addressing some of the challenges that we face in Africa.

We endorse the recommendation that the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa should maintain effective interaction with the Economic and Social Council ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict to be established during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council this July. The cooperation between these two Working Groups will help create a useful instrument for addressing conflicts in Africa.

Article 24 of the United Nations Charter confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But conflicts in Africa are complicated and cannot be resolved only by using the tool of peace and security. These conflicts in Africa are rooted in poverty and underdevelopment, and they result in the displacement of millions of people and the destruction of the social infrastructure within those countries. These are just two issues which fall outside the mandate of the Council. However, we believe that the mandate of the Council is premised on the broader framework of the United Nations and not in isolation from it. That mandate includes maintaining peace and security through arrangements with regions and subregions as specified in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

It is for that reason that the primary objective of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as a central programme of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, thus reversing the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process. In other words, NEPAD is about Africans resolving African problems.

NEPAD has identified three elements of achieving comprehensive peace and security in Africa. They are: promoting long-term conditions for development and security; building the capacity of

African institutions for early warning, and enhancing Africa's institutional capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; and institutionalizing the commitment to the core values of NEPAD, which are peace, security, democracy, human rights and sound economic management.

My delegation believes that, if effectively managed, the ad hoc Working Group on Africa has the potential to facilitate interaction between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and, indeed, the entire United Nations system in helping Africa rebuild its capacity to manage all aspects of conflict. Africa has the structures in place to provide effective support to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa when it is ready to engage. The proposals already made by Ambassador Koonjul are providing the international community with a good basis for further work in developing adequate strategies for conflict prevention, resolution and management in Africa.

In conclusion, I recall that in the earlier part of this meeting, the representative of France raised the important issue of partnership between the Security Council and African countries with respect to conflict resolution and peace-building. We agree with the representative of France that very sensitive issues are often raised in this relationship. However, we would encourage the Security Council to continue to be open to the views not only of the countries in conflict, or even of those that have taken sides in a conflict: the Council, in carrying out its mandate for peace and security, must continue to be willing to hear the views — no matter how contrary — of the countries that have an interest in conflicts or are affected by their spread. In the past few years, the Council has begun a very commendable practice of visiting countries and regions that are engulfed in conflict. We believe that that is a good practice that should be followed wherever there is conflict. We believe that such visits allow Council members to observe first-hand the impact of the decisions and the resolutions that are adopted in New York. That, indeed, is a good thing.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for convening this open Security Council meeting on the work of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and for presiding over the debate. Singapore deserves our appreciation for this innovative debate, in which Africa's peace and security problems are put in perspective, in which Council members speak only occasionally and in which most of the speaking is done by non-members of the Council.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, contained in document S/1998/318, puts the issue before us in context. Today, Africa is in deep crisis. While its natural bounty has attracted colonizers and prospectors from far and wide and has made some of them fabulously rich, most of its people are caught in a vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, disease and conflict. That, together with the colonial legacy, bad governance, injustice and greed, offers a potent recipe for instability and underdevelopment in Africa. It is untenable, and we must collectively change it.

First and foremost, African leaders will have to show leadership in transforming Africa from a land of conflict into a land of construction. It is a happy development that they have already taken two major steps that are vital for Africa's lasting peace and progress: they have pledged themselves to promoting peace, democracy and freedom, and they have launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to reduce poverty and to bring renewal and growth to Africa.

Never before have African nations had so much faith in freedom and democracy and so much awareness and resolve to invest in their people and in their development. As the African countries spearhead their respective specific efforts to resolve conflicts, to improve governance, to mobilize resources and to strengthen service delivery systems, they have also formed regional and subregional mechanisms to pool their resources for collective peace and progress. But their problems are too complex and their poverty too deep for them to be able to address those problems individually and regionally. Therefore, the United Nations, along with other stakeholders in the international community, ought to continue to encourage African countries to initiate regional and subregional cooperation where there is none and to

reinforce it where it exists, so that they can increasingly shape their own destiny.

The United Nations has already been extensively engaged in Africa through its peacemaking and peacekeeping missions, its humanitarian assistance and its New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Its peace missions, barring a few, have helped to manage conflict and to bring peace in many lands, and its humanitarian assistance has benefited millions of refugees and other needy Africans. Likewise, the New Agenda and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa have placed Africa firmly at the top of the global development agenda.

However, Africa, like other needy areas elsewhere, requires more United Nations involvement. Nepal therefore urges the world body to mobilize more of its own resources and to play a stronger advocacy role to help African States to achieve durable peace, to protect their people and to invest in tackling poverty, illiteracy and disease, including HIV/AIDS and malaria, which are now devastating the whole continent. To come to grips with those problems, African countries — particularly the least developed among them — need more aid, deeper debt relief and more investment. They also require improved access to global markets so that they can join the process of globalization.

The Security Council deserves full appreciation for establishing the ad hoc Working Group, chaired by the very competent Mauritian Ambassador Koonjul, to respond to some of the pressing imperatives of Africa. The Group has shown its commitment and competence by convening a brainstorming session and by drawing up its broad programme of work. This is certainly an encouraging beginning and I congratulate Ambassador Koonjul on it.

Yet, formidable challenges remain for the Working Group. The issues identified by the Ambassadors of Singapore and Mauritius in their letter of 13 May 2002 are useful and relevant, but on the one hand, they entail close cooperation and partnership between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, which are largely lacking at the moment, as well as between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations; and on the other hand, they do not cover the entire gamut of issues, which include the humanitarian assistance and sustainable development necessary to ensure effective conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Indeed, durable peace and security for Africa, as we have reiterated umpteen times in the hallowed chambers of the United Nations, call for a comprehensive approach that includes all these elements. Hence, there is no doubt that United Nations organs and other relevant bodies must seamlessly cooperate to fulfil the overall goals of the United Nations.

If the United Nations is to be able to grapple with the problems of peace and security, we will have to look at these issues in a more holistic manner. We must ask how we can revitalize each United Nations organ so that it can fulfil its own specific mandate better and, at the same time, work together with other organs on the cross-cutting issues, as the founding fathers of the United Nations envisaged. This basically entails agreement, first, among the United Nations organs on the modality of cooperation, coordination and coherence that will ensure full understanding of each other's sensitivities and respect for each other's mandate in a collective effort. Critical to the success of such an arrangement will be the involvement of all key stakeholders in all phases of the planning and execution of a comprehensive plan of work of which conflict resolution would be only one element, albeit a very important one.

We encourage the Security Council to pay careful attention to these rather sensitive aspects and to work in such a way that other organs do not feel excluded or marginalized. To address this issue, the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, supported by regional group chairmen and the Secretariat, could agree on a *modus operandi* that, if necessary, could be firmed up by the adoption by those organs of identical resolutions. Perhaps similar arrangements might be in order later between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The conclusion of the brainstorming session and the programme of work presented by the Working Group provide a sound basis for developing such a framework within the United Nations, as well as across the regional and subregional bodies. While too much detail is likely to entangle us in procedure, adequate conceptual and procedural clarity will be essential to erecting a stable edifice of inter-organ cooperation on

complex issues of a multidisciplinary nature, such as conflict prevention and resolution.

Nepal is committed to working for such greater cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. We are also in favour of clearly, though not cumbersomely defined rules of the game so that the stakeholders can all engage in seamless cooperation to help Africa and to achieve the United Nations goals without our being drawn into turf battles.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): Nigeria conveys its gratitude to you, Sir, for personally presiding over the deliberations of the Council this afternoon. We want to thank the delegation of Singapore and Ambassador Mahbubani, whose interest in Africa has always been outstanding. Up until last January, he was the Co-Chairman of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and he has brought that commitment into the work of the Security Council. We thank him very much.

We also want to thank the Ambassador of Mauritius for the outstanding work he has been carrying on in the Council since the election of his country to membership, and in particular in his capacity as Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

This morning, we listened to Ambassador Kébé speak about the involvement and role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and cooperation with the United Nations. We heard his proposals and briefing about what the OAU is trying to do in the establishment of peace and security. We agree with the thrust of his statement.

These issues are not new to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall. For over 30 years, he has been very active on all these issues in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa, in Geneva and here in New York. He has always brought clarity and focus to all the issues he has dealt with and we are sure that he will bring all this to his new responsibilities as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. There could be no better appointment, because he is known in West Africa. The doors will open to him in all capitals and that will facilitate his assignment.

I want to depart from my written statement in order to react to some of the comments that were made this morning, particularly by Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, Ambassador Koonjul and the Ambassador of France. Let me start by saying that the format that the Council has adopted today is extremely useful to our deliberations in order for us to listen to non-Council members and, as appropriate, for Council members to react. In this manner, we can have a dialogue and exchange of views, which will hopefully reach the Council's informal consultations and its future decisions in matters relating to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

Therefore, let me focus on a few issues that Ambassador Koonjul asked us in his letter to focus on. The first issue I want to deal with is the role of subregional leaders and organizations. I am separating them into two categories — regional and subregional leaders and regional organizations — because they are not one and the same. They interlock but they are different. The Ambassador of France, Ambassador Kébé and Assistant Secretary-General Fall extensively covered this issue in its different aspects this morning.

Let us say first that most conflicts are resolved by the efforts of African leaders themselves, without prompting by anybody. This has been going on for years; it is going on now and will continue. A number of regional leaders in Africa — Presidents Mbeki, Konaré and Bongo and even my own President — have always been active in continuously trying to solve different problems in Africa. Some of them are resolved without anyone noticing, without even reaching the public's eye. Because of the nature of this open meeting, one cannot name countries, soldiers or the nature of such conflicts, but these leaders have been successful in persuading other leaders before elections that they should not run for office but should instead allow for an easy transition in their country. That is part of the ongoing efforts that they are making.

With respect to their quiet interventions, the challenge we need to face is how do we feed information on such interventions into the work of the Council? How do we get what they are doing on an ongoing basis fed back to the Council. I am just raising

these questions for the reflection of Council members. One role the ad hoc Working Group on Africa will have is to feed ongoing work in Africa into the work of the Council.

If we do this, we can avoid the type of problem that Ambassador Levitte mentioned this morning, where African leaders are active, planning efforts in one particular direction, and the Council is acting in another. We then have to resolve the contradiction. So, the challenge for the ad hoc Working Group is to work in collaboration with the Secretary-General and to identify the particular leaders across Africa who are actively engaged in some of these issues and feed whatever they are doing into the work of the Council. Nigeria is willing to assist the ad hoc Working Group, at least in regard to what we are doing, to feed the Council information of this kind.

The second point is in relation to the collaboration between the United Nations and subregional organizations. Ambassador Kébé focused on the OAU. I will not focus on that. We are happy that the United Nations has been able to establish a framework for cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is working very well. Only a couple of weeks ago, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS was here to hold discussions with members of the United Nations Secretariat. What one would have loved to see is for the leaders of these organizations to be involved in this type of meeting today because they play a role. If, in the future, the Executive Secretaries of ECOWAS, SADC and others can be invited to participate in this type of deliberation, it will be extremely useful.

Let us briefly discuss the question of preventing conflict following elections. Ambassador Levitte raised that question this morning. He stated that the immediate cause of conflict can be the holding of elections and the acceptance or non-acceptance of election results. He suggested that perhaps it is necessary for the United Nations and the OAU to have joint election monitoring units in place. I would support that initiative. I would even suggest that we start not three months but six months before the election and increase the number of United Nations and OAU officials we send into the field as the election approaches. Let us start working on that because it is surely cheaper for us to spend the type of money needed to prevent conflict than to mount a peacekeeping operation in the aftermath of an election. We do not know what will happen in Madagascar. Because peacekeeping operations are full-fledged operations, if we mount one, we will spend an enormous amount of resources doing so. It is crucial for the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council and the advisory group of the Economic and Social Council to work together in planning this type of election monitoring support and observation, particularly as some of the aspects will impact on human rights, freedom of the press and so forth.

On the question of drawing down peacekeeping operations, in places where we have peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping forces have been rapidly drawn down immediately after elections were held. We need to exercise caution and be patient because the holding of elections does not guarantee peace. It is just the beginning of a process: a process of peace-building. We must try to avoid war in the Central African Republic. I say this also with reference to Sierra Leone, where an election was recently concluded. We in Nigeria see that as the beginning of a process. We urge the Council not to precipitately withdraw or draw down forces. One should draw them down as the situation improves, while doing so in consultation with national and subregional leaders, who are involved in the peace-building process there. We urge you do so. To use a British saying, we should not be penny wise and pound foolish.

On the question of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to which Ambassador Baali and Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa referred earlier on, I will flag only one aspect of NEPAD. The African leaders have committed themselves to not accepting in their midst those who take power by unconstitutional means. They will only accept democratic leaders. In this regard, they have established what they call peer review: if you do not behave well, you are not welcome in our midst. I think they have introduced an important concept. They have also said that African leaders will not be accepted if they are seen to be manipulating the constitutional process in order to extend their time in office. That is one of the problems that brings about the conflicts that the Council is concerned with. African leaders need to be commended for that initiative.

Lastly, on the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in resolving conflict, the choice of Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, as I stated earlier, is commendable because he knows the

terrain. All doors will be open to him. He will be able to interact with the various heads of State in our subregion. He will, therefore, be able to propose solutions to some of the conflicts.

I want to make some practical suggestions to the Council. There are a number of Representatives and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in West Africa: in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and of course the Office recently established in West Africa. It would be useful for all of them to meet occasionally to compare notes on what is happening there, because the conflicts seem to be interrelated. The situation in Sierra Leone is related to the situation in Liberia. Liberia is related to Sierra Leone and to the Mano River Union. The Representatives can bring their collective wisdom to bear, share information and then decide what needs to be done. I think it will be useful.

I also believe it is necessary for the Special Representative for West Africa to regularly consult, not only with the ECOWAS secretariat and the chairman of the authority of ECOWAS, but also with ECOWAS leaders who have plans to act on a particular conflict. I am referring to timely intervention. As I said earlier, the Special Representative has many contacts, which will help him accomplish these tasks for the Council.

Let me briefly explain what I thought should be part of the role of the ad hoc Working Group. I am not trying to define its mandate, but I think we should draw a lesson from the Counter-Terrorism Committee, whose working methods would be useful for the ad hoc Working Group. Because we cannot meet all the time with Council members in this type of forum, it would be useful for the ad hoc Working Group to meet occasionally outside the Chamber with members of the African Group and with the general membership of the United Nations as the situation demands.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, for guiding us again today in what I think is proving a very interesting debate. I congratulate first those who have participated in it. I think that we are moving the subject forward in a way that would be not nearly as productive if we were sticking to our written text. I congratulate Ambassador Apata of Nigeria for abandoning his written text, leaving it with us because it makes some good points, and making even better ones in his ad lib intervention. A lot of good points have been made. We got off to a good start with the interventions of Ambassadors Koonjul, Šimonović, Kébé and Assistant Secretary-General Fall. There was a lot of meat in all their interventions. I want to draw out one or two points, perhaps touching, as Ambassador Levitte did, on one or two sensitive areas.

First of all, the ad hoc Working Group is a good idea. Ambassador Koonjul is taking it forward in exactly the right sort of way. But the proof of it has got to be that it makes a difference, just as the proof of a better relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — which is another area that has got warm support from everybody who has spoken so far — has to be that coordination in New York and indeed with Geneva, where it matters, makes a difference on the ground. Sierra Leone is a very good example of this, a peacekeeping operation that has covered much wider areas than straight peace and security. But it has needed the input of different agencies.

The way we work in New York has to reflect the results that we need in the field; that is the point of doing it. I think a good example is one which Ambassador Šimonović and others have drawn attention to — Sierra Leone and Gambia were quite clear on this — and that is the gap between the end of a crisis and the beginning of normal development. It is an area that we have begun to point to, but it was only when the Secretary-General established a particular office for Afghanistan that we had somebody responsible for the recovery period. This is something that the United Kingdom has been looking for and which we have been talking about in theoretical terms for a long time, and indeed starting to seminar on. But lo and behold, it has begun to happen in Afghanistan. Why is it not yet happening in Africa?

I think our relationship with the regional and subregional organizations has rightly come out as a very necessary theme. I am very glad that the African Union is going to establish a Peace and Security Council, which will give the kind of links that we want to have with the African Union — a very practical utility. I very much like the approach in Ambassador Kébé's speech, where he makes points A to D on his page four of what the mechanism of coordination between the Security Council and the African Union or the Peace and Security Council should actually cover. We should note his focus, because it is first of all rightly typical of the African approach, but it is also something we must pay attention to on funding and on

the evaluation of humanitarian needs and of recovery and reconstruction needs — all areas on which the Security Council is not necessarily the primary player. So we need horizontal coordination. We need vertical coordination with other bodies that are our sisters in this and with the main players, the regional players, the subregional players. That is the grist to the mill of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

I am very pleased that there is warm support for that. As everyone knows, we the United Kingdom have been pushing for it for a long time, and the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group of the Economic and Social Council is going to make that much more practical. I do not see why we should not have — I would have no objection — in at least some meetings of those ad hoc or advisory groups members or one member of the other sitting in the sessions so that there is immediate cross-seeding of the ideas in both groups.

I continue to be very interested in the whole area of governance, which Ibrahima Fall spoke of at some length, as have others. It is remarkable how Africans themselves are now talking about governance. It is the key to a new era of progress, in my view, on dealing with African problems. I want to point to a little contrast that I noticed between what Ambassador Kumalo said about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), that this is about Africans solving African problems, and what Ambassador Sharma of Nepal said as an interested outsider looking at Africa, that — I paraphrase — the weight of African problems all coming together is too great for Africans alone to bear.

How do we put those two things together? I suppose that one answer is to say, as we often feel on the Security Council, that we are all Africans now. But there is a political sense in which Africans must take the lead in solving African problems. The important thing about NEPAD is not only that the document recognizes for Africans the whole gamut of things that need to be done, but that Africans are also, as African leaders, inviting outsiders to come in on a partnership to solve those problems. If we follow Ambassador Kumalo's formulation, we are being invited to become Africans in solving the problems of Africa. I think that is the frame of mind in which the Security Council established the ad hoc Working Group.

But there is also this trade-off, if you like, or interface between conflict and development. I was particularly struck by Sierra Leone's intervention on this, strongly put from a strong recent experience. Peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development, and the causes of conflict and their solutions are nearly always linked to aspects of wider regional stability.

The fact is that it is only since the Security Council has taken on board that conflict resolution is an aspect of development that we have begun to develop working methods that have a chance of solving the concatenation of problems that conflict and development produce. This is why it is not only just a good thing, as a matter of coordination, that we should be working with the Economic and Social Council and with other organs of the United Nations; it is absolutely essential if we are to have an effect on the ground in resolving the problems that hit both conflict resolution and development. What the Ambassador of Benin said for the African Group on this is relevant. Frankly, what the European Union has done by way of analysis and action on this — as the interventions of Spain and Hans Dahlgren, the Special Representative of the European Union to the Mano River Union demonstrate — is extremely important and is an area with which we will continue.

To sum up, what the United Kingdom is interested in out of all of this is results on the ground, better coordination to that end, continuing the institutional progress that we are making in debates of this kind, and learning the lessons not just of our failures, but also of our success stories. We must do a "lessons learned" exercise on Sierra Leone, the latest success story to date, and apply those lessons, if necessary, to the Great Lakes region, which for Africa must now be gotten right, first of all by Africans, but also with us supporting them.

We must take up the cross-cutting issues. AIDS is one such issue. AIDS was not our subject first of all, yet it was the Security Council that gave political impetus to the fight against HIV/AIDS, something we may have to come back to when the Economic and Social Council takes it up later this summer. Also, there is the matter of support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which we are all talking about. But, as Ibrahima Fall said so clearly in his intervention, what matters now is follow-up.

Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) is a matter of follow-up and is something we have not yet got right in Africa, because we do not look at the "RRR" aspects of demobilization. Many other delegations have underlined this, because they are looking for implementation of the analysis that we have all done. They are looking for results.

So we will follow up this debate. We are setting aside time during the United Kingdom presidency in July for an Africa workshop which will build on what we learn in this debate, so that it does not just get left in reports on Council members' shelves or in their capitals as something ephemeral. Rather, it will lead to something that we take up, implement the sensible elements of, move forward in coordination about and produce results on, so long as we are working under the leadership of Africans who know what they want and invite those who want to help to do it with them. That is what we are talking about.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to note that we have 19 remaining non-members inscribed to speak. In addition, several Council members have indicated their desire to respond. This is an important topic that we are debating, and it is my intention to give every speaker the opportunity to put across his or her views. But, given the long list of speakers, I am sure that everyone will agree with me that we have a common interest in not finishing our discussion too late. If possible, I hope that speakers will attempt to be as brief and focused as possible, without, of course, leaving out any important points that they may wish to put across.

The next speaker is the representative of Senegal, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Senegal welcomed the Security Council decision taken following its public meeting last 29 and 30 January to set up an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The Group is fortunate to have the Permanent Representative of Mauritius as its Chairman.

Sir, I should like to congratulate you warmly on assuming the presidency of the Council. We greatly appreciate your personal commitment to continue the work of your predecessors in the presidency. I should also like sincerely to thank all other Council members for doing their utmost to make the issues of Africa their mission.

Regrettably, it has now become a ritual that whenever we discuss the situation in Africa we hear the same hackneyed descriptions: it is a poor neighbourhood on the edge of the planetary village; it is a small, forgotten spot in the world, where the worst horrors pile up one on top of the other — armed conflicts, countless refugees and displaced persons and the apocalyptic ravages of HIV/AIDS. Faced with these tragedies and their dreadful consequences — and the Africans themselves are primarily at fault — the United Nations has to reflect, together with us, on "new and innovative initiatives" — to use a favorite expression of the Secretary-General — because this could eliminate or at least significantly reduce the suffering of people in Africa.

Turning more specifically to the issue of conflict in Africa, regional institutions are firmly committed to seeking political situations with, of course, the irreplaceable assistance of the United Nations. Thus, in Angola, Burundi and the Great Lakes region, for example, there are encouraging prospects, and those countries may soon regain the joy of stability, peace and development.

The role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in maintaining peace and stability is well known, and is recognized even here in the Security Council. Here, the most eloquent case is that of Sierra Leone, where elections have just been held with the support of the international community, and to its great satisfaction.

Turning to the work of the ad hoc Working Group — fortunately chaired, as I said by the Permanent Representative of Mauritius — we congratulate its members on the alacrity and seriousmindedness with which they began their work, thus opening up new prospects for the Security Council to reduce tension and to ensure the intelligent management of conflicts. In that spirit, Senegal fully endorses the approach taken by the Group: that it should look in depth at how to integrate the Economic and Social Council, the new United Nations Office in West Africa, in Dakar, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and civil society in working on strategies for a new kind of productive partnership.

The vital cooperation and coordination between the Working Group and the ad hoc Advisory Group on

African Countries Emerging from Conflict will be crucial in bringing about an improvement in the working methods of the various United Nations structures and in enhancing the coordination of their activities. My country attaches the greatest importance to diligent consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations in the relevant reports, particularly with respect to Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

On the subject of conflict prevention, I would like, just as the Foreign Minister of Senegal has done, to highlight the enlightening example of Guinea-Bissau. This is a typical case of a country where there is every indication of social chaos. Yet, the international community, sitting by as spectator, is waiting for the criteria of good governance and transparency to be met before taking action. The Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau are making enormous efforts to get their country out of crisis. We reiterate our urgent appeal to the entire international community, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to quickly provide the necessary assistance to Guinea-Bissau, as well as to the Central African Republic, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and soon to Madagascar, to help them solve problems relating to the functioning of their institutions and to the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Also, Senegal truly believes that, with valuable input from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Guinea-Bissau can soon find its way back to the path of growth and development.

Senegal would like to draw the attention of the ad hoc Working Group, and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa to a scourge that has become endemic in many African countries, particularly in West Africa. I refer to the proliferation and illegal trafficking in small arms; this is very widespread and has an impact on the stability, security and development of countries in the subregion. The ad hoc Working Group, working with the Office of the Special Representative for West Africa, could really help countries more effectively to mount the various initiatives under way at the national and subregional levels, if not at a continent-wide level.

Senegal supports setting up a working partnership with the main subregional players in priority areas such as early warning, strengthening human resources, capacity building, development and the processes of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

While the Working Group works to implement its programme of work, it is essential that there should also be functional support and participation on the part of all partners in civil society. The international community believes that civil society is extremely important here as a fully fledged partner. It ensures a breadth of representation that must be encouraged.

Senegal believes that conflict settlement and the eradication of poverty in Africa is not something that can be done by governments or public institutions alone. The international community has to take account of, and more deeply involve, other groups and sectors, such as women, youth, the elderly, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, private enterprises, transnational corporations, and so forth.

Experience shows that the only way out of conflict is to enable people to fully and freely enjoy peace, socio-economic security and human rights. This means that political leaders and others at the decision-making levels must respect the principles of a state of law based on democracy and good governance.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) is now becoming the African Union and with the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) there are hopes for the future. These hopes have three anchors: the credo of the crucial responsibility of Africans themselves, the essence of the partnership and the belief in mutual respect. NEPAD, in addition to economic, financial and commercial opportunities, is also a globally integrated strategic framework for freeing Africa from the disasters that it suffers from: endemic poverty, bad governance, fratricidal conflict, and so forth.

This is why Senegal fully endorses continually strengthening the cooperation among the United Nations, the OAU the and subregional organizations in the areas of conflict prevention, management and settlement. Once the Dakar office is up and running, we hope the ad hoc Working Group will visit West Africa to learn at first-hand about the situation there.

I now conclude by repeating what the Secretary-General said: "Armed conflict is the worst enemy of development." Further, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, reminded us that "development" is the other name of "peace".

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): My delegation warmly welcomes you, Sir, to the presidency of the Security Council. We would like to thank the delegation of Singapore for organizing this important debate. We commend its unremitting efforts to introduce an outreach approach in the work of the Security Council in order to increase its transparency and credibility by seeking input from all of the United Nations membership. The background documents, which have been helpfully prepared by the presidency to facilitate today's constructive discussion, deserve our high appreciation.

I wish also to thank Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius, a devoted initiator and the chairman of the Working Group, for his very useful briefing on the Group's activities. Our thanks also go to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for his very important and forthright statement today.

I would also particularly like to welcome the presence at this meeting of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Ambassador Amadou Kébé, as they represent major partners of the Security Council in the areas of conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building in Africa.

We support the ideas that were presented to us concerning ways of enhancing cooperation with the Working Group in pursuing common objectives within each body's mandate.

I have the honour today to speak on behalf of a country that has always been committed to strengthening relations of true partnership with Africa. This commitment of ours was confirmed by substantial participation on the part of from Ukraine in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, by our consistent position in the Security Council, and by our ongoing efforts to expand and foster bilateral relations with African countries and to strengthen interactions with regional organizations.

Today, our attention is devoted to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, which we consider a useful, proactive mechanism of the Security Council. My delegation endorses the concept that the Working Group on Africa should assist the Security Council in addressing the conflict situations on that continent. With regards to specific elements of the terms of reference and the programme of work, I would like to make some brief comments.

As far as the participation at the meetings of the Group, we support the importance of inviting major institutional, financial and academic views to address specific conflict situations. At the same time, we believe it would be useful if participation could be extended, as appropriate, specifically to the parties to the conflict and to troop-contributing countries.

Welcoming in principle the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, we consider that such groups should be open to anyone who does make and can make a constructive contribution to the resolution of conflict. With regard to the setting up of groups of friends for African conflict situations, we support a greater involvement of African actors in such endeavours.

We also recognize the importance of effective cooperation and coordination between the Working Group and other existing, relevant mechanisms within the United Nations, in particular those in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council.

Now that the Group is focusing on confidence building in the Mano River Union, it is vitally important that closer contacts be established between the United Nations Office in West Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in order to consider ways of strengthening cooperation between the countries of the Mano River Union and supporting ongoing subregional peace initiatives. We wish every success in promoting these objectives to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, who is going to take up responsibilities as the head of the United Nations Office in West Africa.

In conclusion, I wish to express the hope that this brainstorming session today will provide additional impetus to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa and ensure an effective role for the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa.

The President: I now call on the representative of Morocco, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for having taken the initiative of organizing this debate under your competent presidency, a debate in which Africa is once again at the centre of the Security Council's attention.

I should also like to welcome the presence of Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group; of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations Office in Dakar; and of Ambassador Ivan Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council, whose contributions will enrich and enlighten our current and future discussions.

The sustained attention of the Security Council and of the United Nations system in general that Africa now enjoys is all the more reassuring in that it is now shared by the entire Council. That is also the result of the daily and persistent action of the Secretary-General, who has fostered an international awareness of Africa and who spares no effort in giving the continent hope for a better future.

We are pleased that this debate is taking place at a juncture marked by encouraging prospects for conflict settlement, particularly in Angola and Sierra Leone and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. As a member of the African family, my delegation is glad to participate in this debate, which concerns the role, the functions, and the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. That Group, established three months ago, was given the mandate of monitoring the implementation of the successive recommendations of the President of the Council with regard to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The nature and the scope of that mandate poses, at first glance, the problem of a possible overlap between the Group's activities and those of the General Assembly's working group charged with the application of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflicts (S/1998/318).

Despite the informal nature of the ad hoc Working Group, a delineation of the fields of action of both bodies seems desirable in order to ensure the rationality and the effectiveness of United Nations action in this area. We believe it is indispensable that there be complementarity between the tasks of the ad hoc Working Group, those of the General Assembly and those of the Economic and Social Council.

For any action undertaken by the Council in the area of conflict prevention and management in Africa, the Secretary-General's report of 13 April 1998 remains the indisputable reference, inasmuch as it contains a detailed analysis of conflicts and of their deep-rooted causes, and it proposes realistic and achievable recommendations to put an end to them. This basic document remains, therefore, the point of departure for any discussion or action designed to suppress or prevent African conflicts. It is only fitting that the programme proposed by the Ambassador of Mauritius draws its references from that same report.

As you have requested, Mr. President, my delegation will focus its observations and comments on four items. I shall begin with relations with the Economic and Social Council.

Given the well-established interaction between peace-building and the socio-economic development of the African countries emerging from conflicts, the coordination of the Economic and Social Council's activities and those of the Security Council goes without saying. The same logic calls for the establishment of links between the Economic and Social Council advisory group and the Security Council ad hoc Working Group, thus giving concrete form to the integrated approach described in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict. Indeed, such coordination is not an end in itself; it will be worthwhile only if it is pragmatic and oriented towards achieving results. It would have the merit of offering more visibility to the Government of a country involved in a conflict, as well as to its partners, whether they be donor countries, international financial institutions or private investors.

Within the context of the coordination sought by the Council in order to prevent the aggravation of conflict or to prevent the outbreak of new conflict, we feel that particular mention should be accorded to cooperation and coordination with the High Commissioner for Refugees and with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Conflicts in Africa are a constant source of untold human suffering. Millions of persons have been displaced from their homes, separated from their families and forced to live in deplorable conditions. In that regard, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross play a valuable and irreplaceable role in the treatment of the

humanitarian aspects of African conflicts and should therefore be able to fulfil their mandate with regard to refugees and detained persons, regardless of the final political settlement. In that respect, it is essential that the United Nations adopt concrete measures with a view to ensuring strict respect for the norms of international humanitarian law by all of the parties to conflicts. As we know, these are imperative norms that must be respected by all.

I should now like to discuss the second item, concerning confidence-building measures in the Mano River region. The Mano River region deserves all the attention that the Council can accord it in this debate. My country, which, upon the invitation of His Majesty the King, hosted on 27 February a summit of the heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, can testify to the commitment of the leaders of those countries to re-establish peace in the Mano River region. The summit in Rabat launched a quest for peace with the adoption of a set of measures to make common borders safer, to repatriate refugees and to provide assistance to displaced persons.

In the framework of the follow-up to the summit, a meeting of foreign ministers was held in Morocco on 7 and 8 April. At that meeting, confidence-building measures were drafted and adopted by the participants. They included the rapid deployment of joint border-security units; the control of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; the establishment of an environment conducive to the repatriation of refugees; the organization of a caravan to restore confidence along the common borders, to include dignitaries from the three countries; and the official opening of borders to permit the free movement of people and goods. The implementation of those measures warrants all the support that the international community can muster with a view to restoring peace to the region.

With respect to the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, my delegation wishes to stress the following elements.

First, the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, entrusted with the primary responsibility for a peacekeeping operation, is crucial to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandate with respect to a given dispute or conflict. That mandate logically begins with a guarantee of strict respect for a ceasefire by all parties. That respect is the starting point and fundamental basis of any process leading to a definitive political solution to the conflict.

Secondly, ongoing coordination between the various United Nations agencies involved in a peacekeeping operation is of significant added value and a principal asset towards the success of a given mission.

Lastly, as we know, the Secretary-General occasionally and periodically holds coordination meetings with the various Special Representatives, either in New York or in Geneva. It might be desirable for similar regular meetings to be held within an African region or subregion or even at the African continental level. Such regular meetings could encourage an exchange of experiences and information that could prove useful in improving mission performance.

I wish now to discuss cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and with States. Such cooperation, set forth in the United Nations Charter and institutionalized by General Assembly resolutions, should be extended to such subregional organizations as the Southern Africa Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, which, it must be said, play an active role in reducing tensions in several African regions. Interaction between the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council and these state groupings could only be beneficial to United Nations efforts to resolve conflicts. Similarly, States whose proximity to or relations with parties to a conflict recommend them for a role in promoting rapprochement and reconciliation would benefit by being included regularly and whenever necessary or useful in the work of the ad hoc Working Group.

Lastly, I wish to say that my delegation is pleased to note that peace-building and the implementation of preventive diplomacy, particularly in Africa, continue to be a focus of the Security Council. This debate, however, should not lead us to forget that peace in Africa remains linked to development and that the United Nations and the international community must pursue both of these objectives at the same time and, with the same determination and energy, assist Africa in its efforts towards democratic, economic and social recovery and to eradicate, in particular, poverty and AIDS.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, I am pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this important meeting, just as you did the other day on an another item of tremendous relevance to you and to all of us.

The Council's programme of work will surely be considerably enriched by this debate; by the contributions of all delegations and Council members; by the very important statements of Ambassador Šimonović, speaking on behalf of the Economic and Social Council, and Ambassador Kébé, speaking on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and, most especially, by all the efforts of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, under the guidance of Ambassador Koonjul.

Following the agreed procedure for this meeting, I wish to refer to some of the points raised today. First of all, it has been made quite clear by the vast majority of speakers that the Council devotes a very significant share of its time to addressing problems of peace and security in Africa. I should like to note the emphasis that has been placed on the quantitative aspect of our work on African issues, whereas it seems to me that the qualitative dimension of our work has yet to be defined and agreed. This leads me to conclude that today's debate and the activities of the Working Group may serve to redress the deficit in the quality of the attention dedicated to the African agenda by the Council, which stands to be improved.

Secondly, we note and have heard a number of references to the fact that the other main organs of the United Nations, each in its own field, are developing initiatives linking peace and security to development problems in Africa. The General Assembly is soon to hold a final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The working group of the Economic and Social Council has also continued to function. The Economic and Social Council dedicated a segment of its annual session on coordination to the question of Africa in 1999. It later dedicated a high-level ministerial segment to Africa. The creation of this new advisory body on countries emerging from conflicts is a new contribution. Lately, the Secretariat has concentrated on giving validity and effectiveness to the regional focus in the resolution of conflicts, starting by applying this concept — attributed to Ambassador Fall — to West Africa, where he will be working.

Nevertheless — it must be frequently repeated — we feel that this broad effort will not lead to conclusions and recommendations that can be easily coordinated in the Council's work of seeking to maintain international peace and security. Often, one has the impression that the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council or even the Secretariat belonged to an organization separate from the United Nations based on their contribution to the work of the Security Council. In other words, this lack of conceptual and operational cohesiveness in the treatment of African issues among the various principal organs of the United Nations should be resolved. Therefore, it is important, as several delegations have mentioned, that the various contacts and the meetings on Africa of the main organs and even the subsidiary organs, whether in the Security Council or the General Assembly, should be mutually reinforcing. The Working Group is very important in this respect.

I wished to refer to one of the points of the programme of work as described by Ambassador Koonjul at the start of the meeting and in the support documentation. There is general agreement on the relevance of those points. There is unanimous agreement, in particular, on the question of cooperation of the Security Council with the Organization of African Unity and with the subregional organizations. As for the functioning of groups of friends for specific conflict situations, those groups should include African and non-African countries. I listened with interest to the remarks on the prudence with which the Working Group should proceed in studying the electoral processes, precisely because of the risk that it might weaken the competencies of the General Assembly or the Secretariat in that field. In general, we believe that the United Nations should advocate the formation of a greater regional capacity for electoral monitoring, so that it can be present in the African continent, where the electoral process will ultimately be managed most, and thus strengthen democracy in the African continent.

Finally, my delegation wishes to support the recommendation expressed by Assistant Secretary-General Fall, supported by various speakers, to include the issue of the proliferation of and trade in small arms in the agenda of the ad hoc Working Group. He mentioned that it was necessary to more strictly enforce the moratoriums and regional actions to prevent the proliferation of arms. It must also be said,

on the issue of the trade in small arms, that it is indispensable that we expend greater efforts. It is well known that there are well-organized and even well-known criminal organizations that continue to function without the Council deciding to confront them in a more direct manner. Mr. Fall mentioned the importance of going to the sources of the weapons. In that context, he mentioned that the Chairman of the Working Group could meet with the weapons-manufacturing countries to request their greater contribution to the solution of this problem, which is overwhelming many countries and destroys thousands of lives in Africa and in many parts of the world. It is therefore an important issue. We will well consider that point in order to elaborate on the suggestion of Mr. Fall in the programme of work.

Recently, we have spoken of the importance of the Security Council building collective positions on the question of Africa. I wish to say that the need of building collective positions exists at the level of the overall system of the United Nations. That is why I believe that this Working Group can contribute to the creation of such collective positions in the United Nations system.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): We are honoured to see you, Sir, preside over the Council's meeting. I would like to start by commending Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, the current President of the Council, and Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius, the Chairman of the Working Group, for organizing this special meeting devoted, yet again, to the situation in Africa. It is our intention to make a modest contribution to the workings of the Working Group. But before I do that, I would like to congratulate the people of East Timor for achieving statehood. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, deserve our commendation.

As we are meeting, my delegation would like to register our appreciation and delight at the good news emanating from The Hague with respect to the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, from Luanda, the capital of Angola, and from Freetown in Sierra Leone. The Ethiopia-Eritrea border conflict has been settled, and the two countries have accepted the arbitration of the Boundary Commission. In Angola, a general amnesty has been proclaimed to UNITA fighters and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Government and UNITA. A few days ago, the Council lifted sanctions on UNITA for 90 days. The latest good news is the peaceful outcome of the presidential and parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone. In all these cases, the peoples of those countries deserve our very hearty congratulations. But it would be remiss not to recognize the positive and active participation of the United Nations and of the Security Council, in particular.

It is against that backdrop that these deliberations are being held today. In all three cases war situations have been resolved through the use of different mechanisms. But one thing is certain and evident, and that is that the Security Council worked in close collaboration with regional and local entities. Perhaps the Working Group could go over the elements that were positive and isolate the negatives in order to expedite conflict resolution.

In the light of the above positive developments, we may wish to ask whether there is a need to revisit all resolutions pertaining to the three resolved conflicts and determine what elements are still outstanding so that they can be programmed for resolution.

In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from where the Security Council Mission has just returned, it is heartening to note that the inter-Congolese dialogue took place in Sun City, South Africa. From the reports we have seen, substantial progress was made. We expect that the Council will stay engaged until all the outstanding issues are sorted out and ownership of the process returns squarely to Congolese hands. However, at this stage it is important to commend the Congolese people on the achievements registered. Along with that, we took note with appreciation of the destruction of 1,000 firearms during the Security Council Mission's visit to Kisangani.

Trafficking in illegal small arms and light weapons is the worst scourge in African conflicts. It will be recalled that the Council has had occasion to address the issue. I need not over-emphasize here that African conflicts cannot be resolved without also addressing the perennial problem of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Peace is central to addressing the development equation of Africa. African leaders are determined to bring positive change to the continent. The people are yearning for peace so that poverty, ignorance and disease can be confronted head on. It is, therefore, important that the Council become an active partner for change. At this juncture, I would like to underscore the postulates of the 2000 Millennium Summit with respect to the plight of Africa. We hope that the Working Group will not try to reinvent the wheel. Rather, we hope that it will analyse the various proposals and come up with workable solutions.

I need also to state here that some progress was achieved in Burundi by the end of last year. After four years of protracted negotiations, an agreement was reached and one of the recommendations was an interim power-sharing arrangement. The transitional Government was installed on 1 November last year. In 12 months there will be a changeover. Fighting, unfortunately, is still continuing, but the regional leaders are working very hard to secure a ceasefire. At the international level, it would appear that there is a wait-and-see attitude. That is not helpful.

The pledges made in Paris have not been honoured. The Transitional Government needs the aid that was promised. It is our conviction that, if assistance were given to the Transitional Government, it would greatly help cement peace by isolating the rebels for what they are. I cannot overstate the fact that conflict resolution has elements of "the carrot and the stick". It is vitally important that the two elements are carefully calibrated. Otherwise, all the efforts will come to naught.

Let me conclude my statement with a few general observations, which I hope the Working Group will address as well.

One of the unintended consequences of conflicts is the movement of peoples, either as refugees or as internally displaced persons. Tanzania has been host to refugees since long before its independence. Currently, we host over 500,000 refugees from Burundi and over 170,000 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a huge responsibility. We submit, therefore, that conflict resolution mechanisms should at all times be factored into the plight of refugees. I am aware that disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion, repatriation and resettlement are an integral part of the conflict resolution mechanism. I am, therefore, flagging the issue of refugees, so that it is does remain an afterthought.

The second issue is the question of the relationship between the Council and local actors. I raise this because of three considerations. The Council is entrusted with the overall authority for securing international peace and security. Along with that mandate is the power to impose sanctions. Given the fact that it is the neighbours of a conflict area who bear the brunt of the fallout of the conflict, it is our view that sound coordination is vital. The region is closer to the scene on a daily basis and punitive measures by neighbours have managed to cajole an obstinate Government to negotiate. Yet, in the light of past experience, the Working Group could discuss the issue and come up with recommendations as to how best to use regional mechanisms to enforce Council mandates.

Last but not least, I would like to address the issue of peacekeeping operations in Africa. There have been misgivings with regard to the handling by the Security Council of African peacekeeping operations. There is a perception out there that there has been a lot of hesitation and under-subscription. The Sierra Leone experience is instructive. There were, indeed, two peacekeeping operations: one by the United Nations under the Security Council and the other by a leading member of the Council. It is quite obvious that that model cannot be replicated elsewhere in the continent, but the Working Group could examine the implications and the ramifications of such an experiment. I have referred only to the presence of two operations in the same area with different command structures. I did not tackle the firepower at the disposal of each of the forces. That can be analysed by the Working Group.

In conclusion, I will only make brief reference to the importance of the peace dividend in any conflict resolution. The African drama has been documented extensively. Indeed, all analyses emphasize the preponderance of poverty. It is our hope that in working on blueprints for conflict resolution, the question of humanitarian assistance and overall development will be given pride of place.

This initiative is welcome. But I would like to conclude by hoping that special sessions do not replace African initiatives; at the end of the day very little is achieved on the ground. With the good will of all, I am quite sure that peace can prevail in the continent and that African development can become a reality.

The President: I call on the representative of Bahrain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Saleh (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our thanks and gratitude to you, Sir, for organizing this public meeting on this important issue. We fully appreciate your transparent method, which includes the involvement of non-members of the Council in its deliberations and the deliberations of the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council. It is our hope that these deliberations will be crowned with success and will contribute constructive ideas that will assist in conflict prevention and resolution in the African continent.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the Chairman of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius, for his comprehensive report to the Council today and his ambitious programme. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

Mr. President, allow me to speak about three important points that I believe need further deliberation. The first of these is the strengthening of coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In Chapter I of the United Nations Charter, entitled "Purposes and Principles", paragraph 1 of Article 1 lists the maintenance of international peace and security as one of the most important purposes of the United Nations. It proceeds stating that the United Nations should "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats" to international peace and security. Taking these collective measures, as we understand it, requires the coordination of efforts of all actors in the international community and within the United Nations organs themselves.

Chapter X of the United Nations Charter states in its Article 65 that the Economic and Social Council

> "may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist the Security Council upon its request".

Hence, we can see that there is a clear and unequivocal legal basis for cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has emphasized this objective in his report on the prevention of armed conflicts, in which he says:

> "A successful prevention strategy depends on the cooperation of many United Nations actors, including the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and United Nations agencies, offices, funds and programmes, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions." (*A/55/985, Executive Summary*)

In this report, the Secretary-General refers to the importance of the role of regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and organizations of civil society. Since the mandate of the Economic and Social Council includes humanitarian affairs, it is our view that there is wide scope for cooperation and coordination to realize the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, we also have witnessed increased attention paid by the Security Council to humanitarian situations and their impact on international peace and security. This is attested to by several resolutions adopted by the Security Council; some of them were adopted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

We can draw a similarity in the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and those between development and peace. The relationship between these two terms is quite close and a lot can be said in this respect. We believe that investment in human capital contributes effectively towards avoiding armed conflict. Development cannot be achieved unless there is peace; peace is endangered if there is a problem with development. Consequently, we believe that the roles of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council are complementary. In this respect, I would like to refer to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. This year it will be taken up as a subject at the Council's substantive session. Next July it will discuss the contribution of the development of human resources in the process of development, including in the fields of health and education. Furthermore, the proposal by the Economic and Social Council to establish an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, if adopted, will be a positive and effective contribution by the Economic and Social Council to the prevention of conflict on the African continent through long-term development programmes or what we call peacebuilding in the post-conflict era. It is our hope

that a specific mechanism for coordination and cooperation between this advisory group and the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council on the prevention of conflicts in Africa will be established.

We believe in the importance of effective coordination between the two Councils in order to realize the noble objectives in the United Nations Charter. This cooperation and coordination may take different forms and could be strengthened through periodic meetings between the Presidents of the two Councils. The President of each Council could be invited to participate in the meetings of the other to discuss issues of mutual interest. There can also be strengthening through meetings between the two Councils; and we hope that will be realized very soon. In this respect, my country welcomes the initiative taken by the Security Council under the Mauritian presidency to address an invitation to the President of the Economic and Social Council to participate for the first time in a Security Council meeting dated 29 January 2002 regarding the situation in Africa. An invitation was extended for this meeting, too. We appreciate this constructive approach, because we believe that both Councils can do a lot, especially in the area of peace-building in the post-conflict era.

In view of the continent's suffering throughout the previous decades and the serious implications of its civil wars, we believe that the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council together can do more for this continent if cooperation and coordination are strengthened.

My second point concerns the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The experiment of previous years has shown the important role played by these Special Representatives, especially in the hotbeds of armed conflict. They played a mediatory role between the parties to the conflict and have provided the Secretary-General and the Security Council with detailed information on the situation in the field. This information is very important for the decision makers. It would be appropriate if some of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives in Africa could be invited to attend meetings on this item with the Council to exchange views with them, to learn of the difficulties and obstacles facing them now or those they faced in the past and to find ways and means for alleviating and solving those problems and difficulties.

My third point refers to cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other subregional organizations. It is indeed important for the Working Group to continue cooperation and coordination with the OAU, which has specific visions and ideas and is close to the parties and the armed conflicts in Africa. This applies to other subregional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which plays an active role regarding the question of Somalia. The Council and the Working Group itself can enhance this role through coordination and cooperation with these organizations and exchanges of views on these problems.

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) is also playing an important role, as stated by the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya this morning. There is a need for better coordination of efforts both among the organizations themselves and with the United Nations.

Finally, I would like to express my support for the statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović, regarding the importance of considering the root causes of armed conflict, because understanding them will facilitate the task of finding appropriate solutions. It is our hope that this meeting will yield ideas that will help the Working Group to implement its ambitious programme.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the fact that you, Sir, are presiding over this meeting of the Security Council as your country's Minister for Foreign Affairs. This clearly demonstrates the importance that Singapore attaches to the work of the Security Council on African issues, and to our Organization's peacekeeping activities.

The Security Council is responsible for resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and security. At the international level this task is particularly meaningful for Africa. In association with the other bodies of the United Nations and with the joint support of the international community, this implies a capacity, when conflicts loom, to engage in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and above all to erect an architecture of peace that will promote development for the peoples of Africa in spite of whatever conflicts there may be in the region.

It is of particular importance to the work of the Council that the ad hoc Working Group on Africa has

been created, because it reflects a commitment to dedicate to African affairs the attention, priority and continuity that they deserve within the Council and the United Nations. The Working Group on Africa has enabled the Council to focus and integrate its efforts on Africa. In the immediate future it must continue to be a focal point for meetings between the Security Council and African countries, regional organizations and other groups within that region.

The Security Council's responsibility for Africa is one of its greatest challenges and it strains the Council's ability to discharge its Charter mandate. The perspective from which the Council should work jointly with Africans in maintaining peace and security in the region is to consider in an integrated way peace as a continuous effort that must be pursued in a well defined manner and in strategic association with the international community as a whole and in close coordination with the other organs of the United Nations.

The starting point for this activity must be consultations with the African countries and with their regional organizations. The guidelines for Security Council action in Africa must be provided by the Africans themselves. The Security Council must be receptive and must apply criteria based on the understanding that the Africans themselves have of their situation and their possibilities. The effectiveness of the Security Council therefore depends on its ability to communicate its tasks and nourish its activities with the points of view that the Africans themselves bring, and also with the existence of strong and solid regional institutions.

It is therefore of particular importance to my country to stress the need for the Security Council to continuously promote the participation of the African organizations as being immediately and primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security in that area. The Security Council must support those organizations and assist them in discharging their missions.

The Security Council, given its restricted powers and the way they are described in the Charter, cannot ignore the close linkage between economic and social development, and peace and security in Africa. Therefore, it is incumbent upon it to forge close links with the Economic and Social Council so that a genuine strategic association enables the two organs to work together, each within the scope of its responsibilities, to build lasting peace in the region.

From that perspective, and viewing the Working Group on Africa led by Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius as the focus of Council action, my country considers that the Council must immediately target its activities regarding initiatives that can be considered by the Working Group on four immediate regional and subregional priorities.

The first is the task of enabling peace through political arrangements that guarantee the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Any democratic transition that could result from political agreements reached through the inter-Congolese dialogue must immediately lead to the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Success by the United Nations and the African community, in keeping with the promises and commitments set out in the Lusaka Agreement, is the foundation for peace, progress and development in the Great Lakes region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, in view of its size and its wealth of resources, could become a tremendous engine for development in the whole Great Lakes area and an invaluable factor for stability. It could just as easily, however, remain a factor of instability and conflict. Therefore the Security Council must attach a high level of priority, as it has to the search for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is what prompted the recent visit of members of the Security Council to the Great Lakes region.

We must work with the Africans within the framework of existing agreements. We must contribute to the success of the inter-Congolese dialogue by means of the instruments designed for that purpose.

Mexico fully trusts the capacities of the signatories of the agreements on which the inter-Congolese dialogue is based. We are fully confident in the capacity of the Congolese to quickly arrive at an inclusive arrangement on a political solution that will guarantee the integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We trust that it will also be achieved with the active participation of the Organization of African Unity and interested countries, in particular South Africa. My country greatly appreciates the efforts of South Africa in seeking peace for the Great Lakes region.

Whatever success we achieve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be a starting point from which to stabilize the entire region and to find a way out of the internal conflict in Burundi and full recovery of peace and security in Rwanda. It is from this perspective that we believe that the Working Group on Africa is responsible for continuing to focus the interest and the political will of the members of the Council on finding, in cooperation with the African countries and organizations, a quick solution to the very risky and volatile situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The second topic that we feel should have priority in the work of the Security Council is consolidating the achievements in the region of the Mano River Union, especially in Sierra Leone. There should be an effort to ensure that the commitments undertaken by the countries of the Mano River region become a reality and that they live within secure boundaries, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. These objectives should also be analysed very carefully and thoroughly by the Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa.

The third issue to which my country attaches high priority in the short term is the situation in the Western Sahara. The right of the Saharan people to self-determination must be guaranteed, whether through political negotiations or through the active participation of the Security Council in the search for a definitive solution to this conflict, which is one of the oldest issues addressed by the Council. We have mandatory deadlines, and we have a situation that cannot go on any further. The ad hoc Working Group on Africa is the proper forum in which to hold consultations between the members of the Security Council and interested African countries in order to arrive at an agreement. The Security Council obviously cannot unilaterally impose a resolution to the conflict, but it can certainly further the possibility for the parties concerned to find a way out.

The fourth priority which my delegation considers a fundamental task of the Council in its current agenda is to continue working for a satisfactory and definitive demarcation of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea in order to put an end to their conflict.

The Working Group should serve as a forum in which to analyse the effectiveness of United Nations peace missions in Africa and their ability to discharge the tasks they have been entrusted with. We should look at their resources and the commitments undertaken by the international community. The collective thinking of the Working Group on the lessons learned in the different experiences of the existing peace missions in Africa can help and make a contribution to enhancing their effectiveness. The Working Group should also examine the efficiency and the timeliness of existing sanctions and should examine the future of sanctions regimes as an instrument which could contribute to the creation of conditions of peace and security in the regions.

The Working Group has an express mandate to facilitate and promote strategic interaction among organs and bodies both in the United Nations and in regional countries to reach the Council's peace and security objectives.

I would like to conclude by saying that among the tasks that we consider essential for the Council, we cannot ignore the importance of humanitarian action undertaken by the United Nations and the international community in Africa. A fundamental element of conflicts that so threaten peace in the area relates to refugees, human rights violations, problems of intolerance — whether interracial or inter-ethnic — and the building of mechanisms for mutual confidence.

The Security Council also has at its disposal and should make maximum use of, the knowledge of international non-governmental organizations in Africa itself and outside Africa. It should rely on them for valuable information in order to make its decision-making more sound.

This working meeting shows the Security Council's interest in deepening its presence in Africa with a greater sense of responsibility and purpose, which must always and above all be done with the inclusion of the points of view of the African countries and following their initiatives.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Zambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), President Mwanawasa of Zambia, to congratulate the delegation of Singapore on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. My delegation

also wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for initiating this meeting, which will undoubtedly go a long way in helping to resolve conflicts in Africa. In the same vein, let me commend your predecessor, Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, for the able manner in which he guided the affairs of the Council during the month of April.

We also wish to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his tireless work. We are confident that, under his chairmanship, the ad hoc Working Group will enhance and supplement efforts to bring about lasting peace on the African continent. We also thank him for the statement that he made this morning on the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group.

My delegation further wishes to thank the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council and the Permanent Observer of the OAU for their important statements this morning. Special thanks go also to Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for his contribution to the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group and for the support he has given to it. We also thank him for the thought-provoking statement that he made this morning. I should like to mention here that we welcome his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. As he leaves to take up his new post in Dakar, we wish him well.

The decision to convene this meeting to discuss the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa is to be highly commended. The meeting is a timely and welcome development in that it allows members and non-members of the Council to review the situation in Africa and to propose a new course of action. My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Security Council for devoting so much time to issues concerning Africa. This debate, and the visits made by Council members to our continent to get a first-hand impression of the situation and to have the opportunity to discuss issues with our leaders and with other parties to conflicts, have highlighted the extent of the Council's interest in resolving issues and in finding solutions to conflicts in Africa.

In view of the complex nature of the conflicts in Africa, the ad hoc Working Group has a huge responsibility to find innovative ways of addressing their underlying causes in order to foster sustainable peace and security on our continent. The holding of this meeting is a step towards realizing the objectives of the ad hoc Working Group.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) was published in 1998 and was considered by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council as highlighting the causes of conflict, which include poverty; local, national and regional instability; and widespread and easy access to small arms and light weapons. The report also contains a series of both specific and broad recommendations on the issues of conflict resolution, post-conflict peace-building and the mobilization of resources for development. My delegation has total confidence in the report's recommendations.

The holding of this meeting comes at a time when a number of positive developments are taking place in Africa. We want to congratulate the people of Sierra Leone on the steps that they have taken towards peace in their country. The successful holding of elections there, in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity during the entire exercise, demonstrated that the people of Sierra Leone were tired of war and desired peace.

We salute the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the significant progress of the inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City, South Africa, under the wise counsel of the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, and President Mbeki of South Africa. The Congolese people deserve praise for their serious approach to their responsibilities and for securing agreement on 87 points, which constituted approximately 85 per cent of what was to be discussed. We hope that the remaining issues will not prove to be obstacles to moving the peace process forward. We also hope that, under the aegis of the Lusaka Agreement, which is accepted by all parties to the conflict, the agreement between the Government and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo will be used as a framework to broaden and incorporate all other groups as they work towards a final agreement. It is important that the final agreement be owned by all groups in the Congo.

We also congratulate the people of Angola for the giant strides they have taken towards the cessation of conflict since February this year. We note with satisfaction the rapid progress of the peace process, the demobilization of former rebel soldiers and the gradual

resettlement of displaced persons. It is our hope that those developments will be permanent and that the people of Angola will not return to war. The Angolan people need peace; we hope that it is now within their grasp. The international community should continue to give them support as they strive towards the attainment of peace in their country.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Eritrea and Ethiopia on accepting the report of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission without reservation. That development is a demonstration of two neighbouring countries resolving the conflict between them in a peaceful and friendly manner.

We wish to note that some progress has also been registered in Burundi. A transitional Government is in place, and we hope that the international community will continue to give support to the peace process in that country.

At this juncture, we would like to commend the leaders of Africa for producing an economic initiative, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It is a blueprint for the development of Africa, and it stresses such aspects as the importance of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacemaking; and post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. More important, it focuses on the utilization of Africa's own resources for development with the support of partners.

The developments taking place in Madagascar, the Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Liberia are, however, less comforting. The situations in those countries demand concerted action by all concerned — including the international community — to restore peace and to avoid further loss of life and suffering among the people. We commend the efforts of the Security Council, the OAU, the regional groups and the various African leaders to bring peace to these sister countries. We pray and hope that they will bear fruit soon.

In conclusion, I wish to take this opportunity to pledge the full support and commitment of my delegation to the activities of the ad hoc Working Group. Its objectives to find solutions to the problems of Africa have our support. It is my hope that, together, we can make a difference and find workable solutions for Africa.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes you, Sir, and is pleased to see you presiding over this important meeting of interactive dialogue, so opportunely convened by the Security Council, on the problem of preventing and resolving the conflicts undermining the African continent and jeopardizing the future well-being of its peoples.

We are indeed very happy and satisfied with this new method of work of the Security Council, which not only has given pride of place to Africa in its schedule, but has also decided to listen to the Africans at regular intervals. It is very true that a man cannot be made happy against his will.

We also wish to thank and congratulate Ambassador Koonjul, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius and Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for the great work he has done to date. My delegation urges him to continue on his course with the courage, resolve and competence with which we are so familiar.

Allow me to illustrate my points by using medical terms that, in my view, are well suited to the circumstances. The issue at hand is indeed one of disease and cure.

During the exchange of views that took place on 29 January between the Security Council and African representatives, the latter emphasized the need for prevention rather than for cure, because once a disease has taken hold, recovery may be difficult, lengthy and sometimes uncertain, leaving a trail of death and suffering in its wake. The Africans therefore recognize the importance of preventive diplomacy, although the need to resolve pressing issues requires the implementation of remedial diplomacy as well.

During the debate of 29 January, the main causes of conflict in Africa were identified, inter alia, along the following lines: the absence of democracy, good governance and the rule of law indispensable to democracy; poverty, illiteracy and disease, especially HIV/AIDS; and the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms. In order to treat a disease, one must first and above all begin to diagnose it.

Some time ago, Secretary-General Kofi Annan essentially said that if the resolutions, recommendations and decisions of the United Nations could solve problems in and of themselves, Africa would have overcome its difficulties a long time ago. In brief, as the Latins said: "Facta non verba". On the basis of the Secretary-General's statement, on 29 January the Africans spoke with one voice to say that, with respect to Africa's development, including conflict prevention and resolution, it is high time for concrete deeds based on the need for results.

Backing up his words with action, the Secretary-General recently opened a regional United Nations Office for West Africa and named Mr. Ibrahima Fall as his Special Representative. My delegation is grateful to him for that and takes this opportunity warmly to congratulate Mr. Fall, whose hardest work, it must be said, has only just begun. In any case, he may be assured of the full cooperation of Côte d'Ivoire.

On another matter, my delegation welcomes the very recent entry into force of the International Criminal Court, which we view as the main instrument not only for preventing, but also for resolving conflicts throughout the world and, most particularly, in Africa. The International Criminal Court completes the array of legal instruments aimed at establishing the rule of law worldwide.

In that context, my delegation believes that the conclusions proposed by Ambassador Koonjul at the first meeting of the Working Group on 22 March with Mr. Fall effectively reflect the letter and spirit of the meeting between the African Group and the Security Council on 29 January. My delegation particularly welcomes the third, sixth, seventh and tenth points of the informal report, in which the Working Group emphasizes the need for a pragmatic approach to guide its actions and envisages the possibility of involving the Bretton Woods institutions in its activities.

In this regard, my delegation believes that, unless we are careful, instead of contributing to an effective struggle against poverty, the activities of the donors — including the European Union and the G-8 — could actually exacerbate poverty. Indeed, the money loaned would be used only by a small group of elites, whereas the debt burden would be borne by taxpayers. It would be desirable for any new approach to involve the donors in the entire process of economic development, including the creation of a socio-political environment conducive to the measured repayment of loans, follow-up to the use of funds and, ultimately, the settlement of the debt.

To us, far from representing any kind of interference in the domestic affairs of States, an approach involving donors, even in electoral processes, could be an impetus to good governance. In any case, such an approach involves support for peoples' choices and not imposition. Moreover, the Working Group envisages working in synergy with regional and subregional organizations and involving itself in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

My delegation has no significant comments to make on the basis of its analysis of the Working Group's programme of work. Indeed, as we have said, conflicts are rooted in poverty, illiteracy, intolerance and fear of the other. Furthermore, one of the main sources of misunderstanding in Africa is very often the endless contestation of elections, rightly or wrongly, by suspicious protagonists. In such circumstances, my delegation would like to see special attention given to electoral processes in Africa. In order to ensure the stability of the continent, the Security Council should help to systematize, universalize and strengthen genuinely independent electoral commissions in Africa.

It is well known that the accumulation, proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms are major destabilizing factors that, inter alia, exacerbate conflicts and legitimize the rule of the strongest and best armed. My delegation believes that, along with the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa should devote particular attention to the problem of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of weapons in Africa. An arms moratorium should be respected not only on the ground but also at the source.

Finally, it has been generally said that, to a significant extent, African conflicts are the result of the nature of the relations between the world's great Powers. Thus, after having witnessed with concern the annulment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, the Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the recent agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons between the United States of America and the Russian Federation. We encourage the two parties to pursue a dialogue in

order to favour a future world free of the danger of nuclear weapons.

These are, in a few words, the reflections that the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire wished to share on the subject of the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Due to the lateness of the hour, I will be very brief in my statement. We welcome your presence, Sir, and your chairing our meeting today. Your presence fully testifies to the fact that you, your country and other members of the Council, including China, attach great importance to the question of Africa. I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Fall, Ambassador Koonjul, Ambassador Kolby, Ambassador Šimonović and all previous speakers for their statements.

First, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Koonjul. Thanks to his outstanding leadership, the work of the ad hoc Working Group is gradually unfolding. He has come up with the future programme of work. Our meeting today is an important one. Listening to the views of the wider membership, especially the African countries, will greatly help the Working Group in the discharge of its mandate. We hope and demand that the Working Group, following this meeting, seriously consider the various recommendations and incorporate them into its future work.

The challenge of resolving African conflicts is, needless to say, daunting and complicated. It calls for the joint efforts of the international community, including the Security Council. A case in point is Sierra Leone, which has made remarkable progress in the peace process. We should draw lessons from the experiences gained in that country. We also believe that the international community should continue to help Sierra Leone and other countries in their post-conflict economic reconstruction and in the reintegration of former combatants into society in order to consolidate the peace that has been achieved.

Resolving the African conflicts remains an arduous task. We believe the key to better solving this issue lies in the proper handling of the following aspects. First, we should reaffirm that the international community attaches the highest priority to the question of Africa. It should ensure that, in terms of political will and resources, Africa should be awarded top priority on our agenda.

Secondly, any attempts to end conflicts in Africa should address both the symptoms and the root causes. While trying to solve conflicts in Africa, we should pay more attention to tackling the root causes by taking effective measures to help African countries to eliminate poverty and to develop their economies.

Thirdly, the various efforts of the international community should be combined to form a driving force. In this respect, we should fully take into account the views of the parties to the conflict, as well as those of neighbouring States.

Fourthly, parties to the conflict should also demonstrate their political will by responding and cooperating with international efforts. Only in this way can international organizations, including the United Nations, play a better role.

In the last century, we saw the African continent besieged by turmoil, conflicts, poverty and famine. It is also the continent with the largest number of least developed countries. That situation cannot continue in the new century. Building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa is a task to be shouldered by not only Africa. It is a common task for the international community. China stands ready to continue offering its support to the Working Group, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Organization of African Unity and the subregional organizations in their work. At the same time, we are also willing to make our own contribution to the earliest possible achievement of peace and development in the African continent.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention Assistant Secretary-General Fall. I had the honour of working with him for an extended period of time when I was in Geneva. I am fully acquainted with his skills and dedication. Before he assumes his new post of head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, I would like to wish him all the best and great success in his future endeavour. I hope that he will be able to make great contributions to the African countries.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malawi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): My delegation wishes to commend the delegation of Singapore for its sustained

commitment to issues confronting Africa, which is demonstrated by the convening of this very important meeting during its presidency of the Council. I would also like to commend the Security Council for offering us yet another opportunity for an interactive debate on Africa, this time specifically related to the Security Council's ad hoc Working Group on Africa. The creation of the Group is yet another important endeavour of the Council in its progression towards increased openness and active engagement in Africa. Although the establishment of the ad hoc Working Group represents a collective effort, permit me to pay special tribute to Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius for his singular contribution to the idea that led to its formation. My delegation congratulates him on his lucid and comprehensive presentation of the programme of work of the ad hoc Working Group and its objectives.

Since the establishment of the Working Group on 27 February 2002, my delegation has viewed it as a potentially important medium for interaction and the exchange of useful ideas between the Security Council and delegations on the issue of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The Working Group has come at an opportune time because, although the turbulence in Africa may be showing signs of abating, as is now the case in Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, to a certain extent, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, any temptation to believe that the end of the hard political road for Africa is now in sight would be rather premature and dangerous because potential hot spots remain in several areas of the continent. The ad hoc Working Group will therefore have the enormous task of evaluating political crises in Africa to determine the extent of possible intervention by the Security Council before the eruption of an armed conflict.

A number of areas indeed exist for useful liaison by the Working Group's with other bodies of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation supports the Group's outlined approaches to its work, especially its planned operational relationship and cooperation with the Economic and Social Council and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) aimed at dovetailing their work. The involvement of the Economic and Social Council in the rehabilitation of societies emerging from war should certainly elicit increased interest in the work of the Security Council through the ad hoc Working Group.

For the Working Group to remain in touch with Africa, its interaction with the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and others is imperative. Those organizations can provide benefit to the Working Group with their hands-on experience and their knowledge of ongoing conflicts in Africa.

The OAU and the United Nations have all along operated in cooperation within the legal framework of the United Nations Charter, strengthened by resolutions of the General Assembly. The functional interface between the two organizations remains a desirable meeting point of ideas related to conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. A new era of field missions of the Security Council and the OAU would mark a welcome and more practical approach to Africa's problems.

Besides supporting the suggested close cooperation among the Group, the Permanent Observer OAU/African Union (AU) to the United Nations and subregional organizations, my delegation also fully endorses the idea of occasionally inviting representatives from academia and the community of non-governmental organizations to interact with the Working Group. Ideas flowing from those sources can only be rejuvenating and enriching, ultimately leading to useful redefinition of some of the strategies of the Security Council.

The suggestion that the Working Group could play a role in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is by no means far-fetched. The vast nature of NEPAD's structure and objectives would assure the Group a useful place in the operation of this gigantic African initiative for economic development. NEPAD was conceived as and is being launched as an OAU/AU brainchild. Obviously, many elements of NEPAD will neatly relate to the aspirations and ideals of the United Nations and the Security Council, especially in the political aspects of democracy and good governance. Those features, which are at the core of NEPAD's thrust, will no doubt be of interest to the Security Council. NEPAD therefore provides not only an instrument, but also a yardstick of Africa's renaissance.

Talking of synergy, it will be necessary to avoid duplication between the Group's mandated work and that of the ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict of the Economic and Social Council; a carefully planned interface of the efforts of the two groups will achieve important and productive collaboration in tackling conflict situations, from prevention to post-war activities and confidence-building.

The ad hoc Working Group's proposed programme of work represents a fairly comprehensive challenge and the Group will need support from various United Nations organs for its implementation, especially where funding is crucial to the execution of the proposed functions. My delegation feels strongly that assessing conflict situations in Africa without field visits for on-the-spot evaluations cannot yield a truly realistic picture that will facilitate the formulation of realistic strategies. The promotion of confidence-building in the countries of the Mano River Union and the enhancement of the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General will always require financial support.

At this point allow me to congratulate the Security Council on its recent field mission to the Great Lakes region, during which it visited several conflict spots in the area for a realistic assessment of the situation. In my delegation's view, the expenditure on that mission was well worth it as it went towards a noble cause.

That kind of expenditure will also apply to United Nations involvement in election observation from the preparatory stages to the conclusion of the process. The terms of reference of such involvement will, of course, require careful formulation to avert possible backlash in the host county. This important aspect in the pursuit of election transparency and accountability will strengthen the ability of the United Nations to make a proper evaluation of a country's election results. The involvement of the Commonwealth or the European Union in such situations has proved useful in the appraisal of the performance of the democratization process in countries where those organizations have played an observer role.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its congratulations to the Security Council on its innovation in the form of the ad hoc Working Group as a practical demonstration of its commitment to meaningful, progressive openness and transparency in the work of this crucial organ at the United Nations. These initiatives deserve encouragement from all of us as they characterize a new era. Malawi's request is that the Group become a permanent feature of the Council. But for the Working Group to become sufficiently productive and useful, delegations will have to play the important role of engaging it in frequent dialogue about conflicts in Africa. My delegation commits itself to staying fully engaged with the ad hoc Working Group in order for its formation to be worthwhile.

The President: the next speaker is the representative of Mali. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali is gratified to see the Council being guided by you, Mr. Minister, as it considers the situation in Africa. My delegation highly appreciates the many initiatives of the delegation of Singapore, under the leadership of Ambassador Mahbubani, to rationalize the work of the Security Council and bring it into line with its prime responsibility: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today's debate is part of that dynamic. It is my pleasure to thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, for having reported on the work of the Group with his usual thoroughness.

Speaking at this point in the debate, I would like to concentrate on two points which, in the opinion of my delegation, deserve particular attention.

First, I would like to emphasize that for the delegation of Mali conflict prevention and resolution in Africa require a comprehensive, integrated approach that takes into account the complexity of the underlying causes of conflicts in Africa and their devastating consequences. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's analysis in his report of 7 June 2001 on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574), as well as the adoption of resolution 1366 (2001) of 30 August 2001 and the presidential statement of 31 January 2002 (S/PRST/2002/2).

In that connection, we believe that the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution could derive benefit from the capacities of the entire

United Nations system in devising and carrying out studies on remedying the underlying causes of conflict. That is why my delegation advocates strengthening the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We say this because, despite their distinct roles, the two bodies are complementary when it comes to action in the areas of peace, security and economic and social development. Furthermore, it is important to give concrete form to the Secretary-General's intention periodically to report to the Council on regional and subregional threats to international peace and security, in particular border problems, illicit trafficking in small arms, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, refugee issues, mercenaries, child soldiers, paramilitary forces and the consequences of the interaction of these factors with security.

The second point that I would like to emphasize relates to the need to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. In that connection, we should recall that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), have recently been endowed with institutional capacity for early warning activities and conflict prevention, in particular through their own mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. It is indispensable that we support those mechanisms, and the ad hoc Group could usefully work in this domain.

This morning, Ambassador Kébé and Mr. Fall presented some ideas on this matter, which my delegation fully supports. I would like to recall that during our term on the Security Council, Mali engaged in this exercise with some success. The relations between ECOWAS and the Council have been developing since then in a genuine spirit of partnership which should be further reinforced and expanded. The forthcoming inauguration of a United Nations Office in West Africa is also part of this movement, and Mali will contribute all the required support.

In conclusion, I would like to associate the Malian delegation with the well-deserved tribute that has been paid throughout the meeting to my mentor and friend, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who is about to take up his duties as Assistant Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Office in West Africa. Our best wishes for success go with him, and we hope he will make a real success story of the United Nations Office in West Africa. He owes no less to our subregion, to the United Nations and to himself.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to commend your delegation and yourself for the initiative to have this important debate on the Working Group on Africa. Your presence here throughout the day is certainly a testimony to your own commitment. I would also like to commend my friend Ambassador Koonjul for his initiative in establishing and chairing the Working Group. The Working Group has had a number of meetings. I think the idea of listening at this meeting to non-members of the Council, particularly our African friends, is highly appropriate. I think we have had a very rich discussion.

The hour is late, and I shall not make very specific points. A number of very interesting proposals have been put forward, and it will now be up to the Working Group to act on them. I would just like to highlight a few approaches that Norway thinks are important.

We strongly agree with the many speakers who urged closer consultation, interaction and cooperation both within the Security Council and with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations. In what concrete form should this take place? That is something I think we need to think about. But I think it should be clear to all of us that we need to pursue this avenue.

The second approach I would like to highlight is the need for closer interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. I feel that for conflicts in Africa we need a very broad approach. As Ambassador Kumalo stated this morning, these conflicts cannot be resolved by only using the tool of peace and security. We need to add other components. We need to deal with the root causes if we are to achieve durable peace.

The third approach I would like to mention is that we need to work for regional solutions. This was highlighted by several speakers from West African countries, and I think it is appropriate for other parts of Africa also.

In conclusion, I have one specific point. The representative of Mali and many other speakers made specific reference to the role of small arms. There is no doubt that small arms are fuelling these conflicts, so we really need to find a way to come to grips with that problem.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Mozambique. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): We congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Singapore, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May in such a committed manner. Your presence and the dedicated work of your Permanent Representative, Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, and his able team merit our recognition and appreciation. Allow me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, to warmly welcome your initiative to hold this public and interactive debate on the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

I wish to make a few general remarks on the issue before the Council today and then to address some of the specific issues you, Sir, have asked us to discuss. When the Security Council met on 29 and 30 January 2002, it had an extensive and fruitful debate on the situation in Africa that was blessed by the presence of a number of ministers and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As a result of that meeting, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/2002/2) on behalf of the Council in which he summed up the debate and enunciated a set of recommendations on future United Nations work to address the situation in Africa. To monitor the implementation of those recommendations the setting up of an ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa was proposed. Today's meeting is therefore timely and important in terms of assessing the work done by the Working Group so far.

At this juncture, allow me to sincerely thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group, for the comprehensive briefing he presented today on the work carried out so far. We fully commend his remarkable leadership of the Group and pledge our full support to his endeavours.

As we have indicated in previous statements in the Security Council and elsewhere, our analysis of conflicts in Africa must be comprehensive, pragmatic and result-oriented; it should encompass a clear understanding of their root causes, the actors involved and the issues at stake.

Success in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa can be achieved only through a proactive approach based primarily on prevention — a strategy that is effective, forward-looking and less costly.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict, which in Africa are synonymous with the pressing needs and concerns of the people, which include poverty, underdevelopment, poor governance, endemic diseases, exclusion, State legitimacy, ethnic divisions and the proliferation of arms. With regard to arms, I would like here to support the statement made by the Assistant Secretary-General, Ibrahima Fall, and his proposals. I would like to add that we need to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which we all adopted in July last year, and which the Council welcomed.

Prevention entails a strong nexus between peace and development. The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) rightly highlights that nexus and advances a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development. We are hopeful that this approach will help to meet the special needs of many African countries, and it is in that connection that we see closer and enhanced coordination among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies.

The United Nations must also increase its support to Africa's own peace and development initiatives. African countries have continued their efforts to build African capacity for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and for development.

African countries, individually or through their regional and subregional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), are becoming more active and important players in these endeavours, as has been already suggested this morning and this afternoon. The creation

of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution bears testimony to the continent's determination to settle conflicts in Africa.

At the subregional level, the Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community, at their ordinary summit in August 2001, in Blantyre, Malawi, signed a protocol for the operationalizing the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and, more recently, established an inter-State politics and diplomacy committee to enhance the effectiveness of the Organ.

All these initiatives attest to the strong commitment of Africans to solving their problems and to the reversal of the appalling situation of conflicts in Africa. These confidence-building measures need to be nurtured with the support of the international community to ensure their success.

Failure of preventive measures brings us to conflict resolution and management. For the success of conflict resolution and management, we need to review the mandates of peacekeeping operations and the conventional approaches to them. Due to their multidimensional nature, current conflicts require a comprehensive approach and the involvement of all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels.

Allow me now to briefly touch on some of the specific issues of concern to our delegation. First, we are happy to see that the Economic and Social Council has also taken an important decision expressing a commitment to support Africa by establishing an ad hoc Working Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflicts. We wish to see greater collaboration and coordination of efforts among the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies and agencies in their work on Africa, and we welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council at this meeting.

Secondly, we believe that success in conflict resolution is closely linked to the level of understanding of the conflict itself. Those involved in the mediation of conflicts should possess a profound knowledge of the nature and dynamics of the conflict, which can allow them to exercise the best judgement, undertake effective action and provide critical assurances to all parties to the conflict that they are also parties to the solution. We therefore believe that those tasked with mediation, including the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, should possess all those attributes if they are to enjoy the much needed trust of all parties, and to work with the highest level of impartiality and commitment. In that regard, we congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ibrahima Fall on his appointment as head of the United Nations Office in West Africa. He is the kind of representative that we are talking about.

Thirdly, we also find the establishment of groups of friends for specific conflict situations very useful. We are of the view that these groups can be fundamental in the solution of conflicts by providing an excellent forum for debating the dynamics of the conflict itself as well as for advancing peace initiatives. Such groups should be more inclusive and representative.

Fourthly, we further believe that every initiative for conflict prevention and resolution can only benefit from the involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, universities and academia: actors that can bring added value to the process through their deep knowledge of the relevant conflicts, as well as their often easy access to the parties involved.

Fifthly, we are concerned that our continent continues to register conflicts related to the exercise of democracy as candidates and their supporters often call into question election results perceived to be unjust and unfair, as was referred to earlier on in this meeting. This situation is a clear demonstration of the need for support for good governance and democratic institutions in African countries. We thus find it critical to increase international assistance in the fields of governance and the strengthening of democratic institutions, including those related to electoral processes. It is clear that elections by themselves, however successful, are not sufficient to ensure stability and progress.

Finally, the prevention and resolution of conflicts and movement towards peace, stability and development in Africa can be crowned with success only with the active involvement of the Africans themselves. In Africa there is already an institutional capacity, both at the continental and the regional levels, for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

If these issues are taken up seriously by the ad hoc Working Group and by the Council, and if the

conclusions are followed up, then we believe that we have a greater chance to succeed.

A lot has been said about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I will not develop additional ideas on this, except to mention the importance that it has for Africa and for the international community.

We encourage the United Nations to foster its cooperation and collaboration with continental and subregional institutions in the search for durable solutions to the problems affecting our continent. The level of human, material and financial resources committed to assisting Africa will remain an essential barometer in measuring the level of political will and commitment to the continent.

We are fully aware of the efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General to promote peace, security and development in our continent. We commend those efforts, and we wish to express our gratitude and to stress once again our strong determination to work together for the noble cause of bringing about peace and development in Africa.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Somalia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hashi (Somalia): Mr. President, let me join my colleagues in expressing my profound thanks to you for chairing this meeting of the Security Council. This is indicative of your personal commitment and that of your government to African issues. Let me also express our appreciation to Ambassador Mahbubani for his stewardship of this Council for this month. My highest regard is also extended to Ambassador Koonjul for sowing the idea of a Security Council ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. I also take this opportunity to thank Ibrahima Fall and Ambassadors Kébé and Šimonović for their very enlightening contributions.

Today's meeting is timely because it is taking place on the eve of the anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of its coming transition to the African Union. More particularly, and in view of the fact that conflicts continue to be a major obstacle to Africa's economic and social development, for us, who have come from countries where conflicts continue to prevail, this meeting has a singular significance.

It is our hope that the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution will be an important engine for the search for peace and stability in Africa's areas of conflict. In this regard, we will welcome the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. That new vehicle will no doubt enable African countries emerging from conflict to embark on the necessary road of recovery and reconstruction.

We believe that, while the mandate of the ad hoc Working Group is comprehensive enough to cover many areas, it should also cover the broader spectrum of conflict management, including enhancing early warning systems, timely sharing of information gathered at the early warning stages, peacemaking, peace-building and post-conflict peace-building and the prevention of recurrence and relapse into conflict. That holistic approach would enable the ad hoc Working Group to engage more proactively in the quest for conflict management in Africa.

Let me say at this juncture that subregional organizations have been successful in conflict resolution and management. I have a number of them in mind. For example, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States has taken steps to resolve conflicts and crises in the Central African Republic and in Chad and continues to search for a resolution to conflicts in Sudan and in Somalia.

Likewise, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been successful in that regard. The success in ending the conflict in Sierra Leone should be lauded. The experience gained will be invaluable to the ad hoc Working Group; it is essential to tap into these positive experiences with a view to exploring whether they can be useful models to be emulated in future conflicts. For that purpose, we submit that the ad hoc Working Group from time to time should invite leaders of these subregional organizations and other eminent personalities to share their experiences with the ad hoc Working Group.

In our view, it is equally important that the ad hoc Working Group should continuously monitor other initiatives aimed at national reconciliation that may have stalled or faltered; this is in order to examine the reasons for such lack of success with a view to

preventing the recurrence of stalled or faltered attempts in future conflict management in Africa. In that regard, I have in mind the Somalia peace process mandated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which my Government fully supports. The obstacles to that process need to be removed, and the ad hoc Working Group could use its good offices to give an urgently needed boost to the process.

As members are aware, conflicts result in massive destruction of life and property. Large groups of people are dislocated. Some become displaced, while others seek refuge in safer havens. The ad hoc Working Group needs to see first hand the plight of people in conflict, particularly the most vulnerable in society: the elderly, women and children. It may therefore be useful for the ad hoc Working Group to undertake field visits to areas of conflict where circumstances permit.

In the work programme of the ad hoc Working Group, only some areas of conflict are mentioned. We understand that this is not to the exclusion of other areas in conflict. While all conflicts demand due attention, the ad hoc Working Group has to set priorities within priorities. The conflict in Somalia is a case in point. The ad hoc Working Group should give a special focus to forgotten conflicts in Africa.

In order to move the national reconciliation process forward, Somalia needs the unqualified attention of the ad hoc Working Group and of the international community at large. While we appreciate all of the efforts that have been undertaken, Somalia is reaching out to the international community to ask it to re-engage more vocally and energetically. For our part, we are willing to cooperate with the ad hoc Working Group in any manner that can accelerate peace throughout Africa.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): On the occasion of this open meeting of the Security Council, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore and his Permanent Representative to the United Nations for having taken this auspicious initiative of organizing a Security Council debate on Africa. We congratulate all speakers for their relevant statements, which have contributed a great deal to our understanding.

Rwanda has just commemorated the eighth anniversary of the genocide that it suffered in 1994, which caused incalculable human and material losses. My country would like to offer our experience to the international community to make the world aware of the danger inherent in all philosophies of hatred and exclusion and to ensure that the principle of "never again" declared after the Second World War will be realized as a universal principle for all the peoples of the world through the philosophy of collective security.

Since we are discussing Africa today, I should like pay tribute to all freedom fighters — to all those heroes who died as pioneers in the fight for the freedom and dignity of their peoples. Africa not only lost its sons and daughters, but also suffered monstrous humiliation and immense material damage as a result of the systematic plunder of its natural resources without compensation. Africa, therefore, should not have to bear and suffer alone the consequences of history and of the passing of the colonial era.

Since we are having a substantive debate on Africa, we might ask ourselves the question: which Africa are we discussing? There are various Africas, which constitute facets of the physical Africa depicted on maps or of the physical Africa that we fly over in aeroplanes. When we recall the way in which Africa was carved up, we can discuss the reality of the multitude of Africas: the Africa of slavery, the Africa of colonialism and of neocolonialism, the so-called black Africa and white Africa, the Africa of apartheid, the Africa of tribes and of ethnicities, the Africa of hatred and of exclusion, the "Bantu" Africa, the mythic Africa, the Africa of soldiers and of coups d'etat, the Africa of militias and mutinies, the Africa of nationalities and of unbridled nationalism, the Africa of demons and of evil spirits, the Africa of the illiterate and the functionally illiterate, the Africa of the poor, of misery and of the miserable, the Africa of diamonds and of black and yellow gold — it is all there. But there is also the Africa of Nkrumah, the Africa of Lumumba, the Africa of Benbella, the Africa of Nasser, the Africa of Um Nyobe of Cameroon, the Africa of Sékou Touré and the Africa of Mandela. Fortunately, that Africa too has existed, and it exists today in our awareness.

The Africa that we are discussing today is ravaged by ignorance, dire poverty, bad governance, military coups d'etat, manipulations, struggles and Western and other foreign influences. What can we do

to pull it back out of the dark pit of slavery and colonialism into which it sank? How can we say today that the debate on slavery and colonialism in Africa is no longer relevant when their disastrous consequences still exist in Africa — when the damage done then still afflicts it today? All the harm caused on the African continent by slavery and colonialism must be told.

The conflicts that ravage Africa have deep causes related mostly to colonialism and its ravages and also to the neocolonialism that followed the period of so-called political independence of African countries of the 1960s. Since then, each African country that has attempted to organize and to experience true political independence has been blocked by neocolonialists and their allies, either directly or indirectly through the intermediary of certain international bodies. What is to be done when neocolonialism remains invisible, wearing kid gloves, and when sometimes the glove is the United Nations, which blocks Africa and prevents it from experiencing a true rebirth, over and above all slogans?

There was a genocide in Africa for the first time in our continent's history, and unfortunately that genocide occurred in Rwanda. The planners and authors of that genocide fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 1994, under the cover of the operation involving the so-called Turquoise Zone. There, they continued to launch attacks on Rwanda and to massacre innocent people. The Government of Rwanda shouldered its responsibility and fought them right into their Congolese sanctuaries. But had it not been for the military, political, material and financial support of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its allies for these genocidal forces, the Rwandan army would long ago have been able to find a solution to the problem.

What are the underlying causes of the Great Lakes conflict? Who is pulling the strings? Why does the conflict persist? Who is behind the curtains? Who is at the backstage? Why does the spirit of genocide — of exterminating "the other" — spread through the whole Great Lakes region before our very eyes, as we all stand by helplessly?

With regard to the genocide in Rwanda, at the request of the Security Council, the independent inquiry led by former Prime Minister Carlsson of Sweden submitted a report to the Council. That report, having assigned responsibilities for the African-Rwandese tragedy, recommended the establishment of a special post-genocide economic and social assistance programme for Rwanda. Why has that recommendation — favourable to a needy Member of the United Nations — not been implemented?

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the recent report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, which recognized Rwanda's security concerns. We recall that the Rwandese troops who are present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are there only because of the security problems of Rwanda and its people. I should also like to reaffirm my Government's commitment to supporting all provisions of the Lusaka Agreement, as well as its commitment to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo once the question of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) is settled. This morning, the representative of Bangladesh referred to the withdrawal of Namibian troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Namibian presence was merely symbolic. Namibia has no border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has no security problems with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and therefore is not concerned with the DDRRR programme, which is one of the sine qua non conditions for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, I should like to congratulate our brother and friend, Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, on his new duties. We wish him every success.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your well-deserved presidency of the Council for the month of May. Costa Rica admires the work carried out by Singapore over the past 18 months as a non-permanent member of this organ. We have noted Ambassador Mahbubani's leadership and the constructive and critical role played by his delegation. We believe that his work clearly demonstrates the importance of the presence within this organ of smaller countries in guaranteeing its effectiveness and legitimacy.

We welcome the convening of this interactive meeting on the work of the ad hoc Working Group on

Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa as an opportunity to have a candid exchange of views with its Chairman, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, and the other members of the Security Council. We are also grateful for the 13 May letter of Ambassadors Mahbubani and Koonjul, setting out clear guidelines for this debate. That useful document, which has helped us to focus our statements and to define the contents of the debate, is a sound precedent that should be maintained.

Costa Rica fully supports United Nations monitoring of electoral processes in Africa. We recognize that this activity has facilitated the peaceful settlement of various conflicts, not only in Africa, but also on all the continents. Suffice it to recall the examples of El Salvador, Cambodia, Kosovo and the Central African Republic, where the United Nations played an indispensable role in preparing and coordinating elections held following the end of the respective armed conflicts.

We must, however, be realistic about this task. Democracy cannot be built in a day. The existence of electoral mechanisms does not guarantee the existence of genuine democracy, which is a long-term and continuous process, requiring ongoing efforts of coordination and concertation, respect for the will of the majority and for the rights of minorities, understanding and negotiation. Genuine democracy exists only within a flourishing culture of mutual respect and when there is general acceptance of both the existence of common principles and objectives and of legitimate differences of opinion and legal avenues for dissent.

The United Nations can cooperate in holding clean and fair elections in post-conflict situation in three different ways. First, the Organization can cooperate directly in the preparation and holding of elections. Its experience in this field is considerable, ranging from the provision of security for electoral centres to the preparation of electoral roles. Secondly, the United Nations can cooperate in demilitarizing the electoral process in order to avert fraud, voter intimidation and violence during the voting process. To that end, it is necessary to demobilize and disarm ex-combatants. Thirdly, the Organization can help political leaders to respect the outcome of the electoral process. To that end, it is essential to create institutional mechanisms to guarantee the legitimacy of elections and to provide peaceful resolutions of ideological, political and economic differences. These tasks require careful preparation and implementation. United Nations involvement during the transitional period is crucial in this respect.

Moreover, assistance in and monitoring of electoral processes should not be confined solely to the first series of elections in a post-conflict period, but should extend throughout the period of democratic consolidation. Holding one election does not indicate a return to normalcy; on the contrary, it is only the first step towards a democratic existence. Unfortunately, the international community often considers that its work is done once the first elections are over. Experience has shown that this conclusion is wrong.

We believe that the United Nations should provide assistance to consolidate democracy on an ongoing basis. Our Organization should promote both the strengthening of social and political mechanisms that promote free competition through periodic elections, as well as transparent, responsible and open governance. It should promote the dissemination and deepening of democracy in all spheres of society. It is necessary in parallel to ensure that the democratic process is not distorted or corrupted by leaders who foment discord in order to promote their private ambitions at the expense of the well-being of the community.

As regards coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, we feel that it is essential to improve the activities of each organ in conflict prevention and resolution on the African continent. Their respective mandates press them to adopt specific measures and recommendations to improve the political, economic, social and military situations of the continent. Nonetheless, we must not forget that those two bodies have clearly distinct attributions and competencies.

The Security Council has a mandate to maintain international peace and security in the face of political and legal disputes and armed threats to peace. The Economic and Social Council, however, is mandated to promote economic and social development and universal respect for human rights. To the extent that each organ carries out its respective tasks in full, their efforts will reinforce each other and bear optimal fruit. If economic and social development and full respect for human rights are not achieved, however, a lasting peace will not be achieved in Africa. At the same time,

while armed conflict persists, it will be impossible to achieve true economic and social development on the continent. That is why it would be desirable to increase the level of cooperation and coordination between the two organs, thereby effectively implementing Article 65 of the Charter.

The question is, therefore, how to enhance that interrelationship. In recent years, various initiatives have been undertaken to allow some members of the Economic and Social Council to attend meetings of the Security Council and vice versa. Last year, a plenary meeting of the two organs on an equal footing was unsuccessfully mooted. Were those proposals to be implemented, they would improve communication between the two organs, although they would not, per se, guarantee better coordination of their operational activities. Regrettably, the mere exchange of information or coordination of independently developed activities is insufficient.

In order to develop true synergy between the efforts of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, their activities must be coordinated from the very moment when they are first developed and proposed. A common and detailed strategy must be crafted within which the activities of the two organs will coincide and complement each other. Decisions cannot continue to be adopted in isolation. We must create a framework within which members of the two organs can jointly assess the situation in Africa in all its aspects and can together design a common strategy in response. Further, the members of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council should jointly, with representatives of the Secretariat, evaluate the activities that the two organs are already carrying out in Africa. They should then decide what improvements to the existing instruments and mechanisms are required. In essence, what is required is a period of serious reflection, long-term vision, constructive criticism and genuine joint efforts. We believe that a series of periodic seminars or retreats, bringing together representatives of the States members of both organs and the Secretariat would be a first step in that direction.

We should not delude ourselves by thinking that greater coordination between the two organs will automatically improve the effectiveness of the United Nations in promoting peace and development in Africa. The real problem is not a lack of coordination but a lack of resources and a lack of clear goals and concrete mandates.

If economic, technical and human resources are not allocated and if the indispensable political support is not forthcoming, peacekeeping in Africa cannot be effective. One cannot build peace if one does not tackle the underlying causes of conflicts. The development of democracy requires not only the establishment of electoral mechanisms but also a long process of cultivating a democratic culture.

Sustainable development is impossible if the necessary resources are not provided for economic development, poverty alleviation and unemployment and without access to international markets. Social development requires the inclusion of human rights as a guiding principle of national policy. The task is enormous and requires the firm and resolute support of the entire international community.

The problem of the lack of coordination is not limited to the relations between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, but can be found in all endeavours of the international community in which various actors are attempting to prevent or resolve conflicts. We have sometimes seen how countries with influence on the parties, various international organizations, diverse groups of mediators, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations promote contradictory or redundant initiatives. In the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, one can find some projects with an excess of resources while others, equally important, are neglected. Those difficulties are aggravated by the duplication of mandates, competition for resources and influence and a multiplicity of political goals.

A possible solution to the coordination issue is the creation of groups of friendly countries. But that is an instrument that can be used only if the number of actors is small, if those actors possess a high degree of political commitment and if their interests generally converge. If those conditions do not exist, such a mechanism will not work. Furthermore, groups of friends should never replace the Security Council as the main centre for decision-making on behalf of the international community.

Alternatively, increasing the authority of the Secretary-General's Special Representatives might solve some of the coordination problems. The most successful Special Representatives have been those

who served as go-betweens among the countless international actors and who, in that fashion, were able to channel various efforts in the field. We believe that this function of the Special Representative should be institutionalized. However, we are aware that the task is hindered by a lack of coordination among the capitals and by the competition and rivalry among the various actors and organs. Special Representatives will be able to effectively coordinate international actions only when all the actors effectively recognize the primacy of the United Nations on the issue of conflict prevention and resolution and when those actors subordinate their narrow interests to the goals and strategies adopted by the Security Council.

Considering the terrible consequences of armed conflicts for the peoples of Africa, we believe that those conflicts must be prevented before they break out. That requires an ongoing and sustained effort by the African peoples themselves and by their leaders in order to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and of the rejection of violence. It is indispensable to ensure decent living conditions for all the continent's inhabitants to satisfy their basic needs, ensure respect for fundamental rights and enable them to resolve their differences democratically. What is needed is a firm policy of strengthening civil authorities and reducing spending on arms, redirecting military spending towards education, health, housing and social investment.

Today we see positive signs of a better future for the people of Africa. We have witnessed the end of some armed conflicts, the strengthening of democratic institutions and growing respect for human rights and democratic legitimacy. African leaders are increasingly active in the prevention and resolution of the conflicts afflicting their continent at the same time as they are promoting the economic and social development of their peoples. The international community and the Security Council have the obligation to fully support them.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): My delegation wishes to thank the Singaporean presidency for convening this meeting. I do not think it is a coincidence that during Singapore's presidency Africa has occupied a high place on the agenda of the Security Council; this is due to the importance that Singapore attaches to the problems of Africa. Mr. President, your own presence further confirms that fact. Like some of my predecessors who spoke on this subject, I would like to say that you have an excellent team here at the United Nations. It is ably led by Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani. My delegation also wishes to thank the Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, for his excellent work, which definitely led to the convening of this Security Council meeting today.

I also welcome the presence of the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Šimonović, Ambassador Kébé of the Organization of African Unity and my good friend Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, whom I wish well in his new task in Dakar.

Uncharacteristically, allow me to thank all those members of the Security Council who are still persevering and staying with us until almost 9 p.m. I also wish to thank the speakers remaining on the list. I would especially like to thank the Ambassadors who have stayed — the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and, until very recently, the Ambassador of Norway. They deserve special thanks, at least from my delegation, for having stayed.

I do not have a prepared statement as such, which would have been distributed to you. After having listened to many statements, I fully endorse the statement made by South Africa. Ethiopia's formal statement has been made by South Africa. I am now just adding a few points.

The United Kingdom mentioned lessons learned. I am going to dwell on lessons learned and things that we, the Ethiopian delegation, feel that the Council and the rest of us should really look at. Some of it may not be flattering to the Council, so please bear with me.

Many have spoken very positively about the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict having been successfully resolved. We are very happy with the peace agreement signed in Algiers and with the Boundary Commission's decision, which both countries have accepted. This is very positive. But if we go back and ask, could this conflict have been prevented? The answer is, yes, of course. I do not want to enter a debate on this. Since I

do not see my Eritrean friends here, I will not indulge in that. But it could have been avoided. The role of the Council, in our view, should have been more vigorous in supporting the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which took a very good initial step through its conflict resolution mechanism. But it was not supported at the beginning. The OAU, the regional organization, did not have the full, vigorous support of the Council. I am saying that the Council could have prevented that conflict; the conflict whose successful resolution is now referred to by all.

Other lessons learned have related to coordination by external actors. That is very important. Some members have also mentioned that. Regarding coordination or the lack of it, as some delegations, such as the Djibouti delegation, have pointed out, if there is good coordination, there is the interest of a big Power. That is unfortunate, but that is the case. In Sierra Leone, which had the support of the regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), we have had a positive and happy outcome. I congratulate my brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone on their successful election.

In other cases where this has not been the case, such as Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the conflicts have not been resolved. There are many actors and various initiatives. That is another point I wish to make. We should avoid having too many initiatives by various parties, some of which have differing or conflicting interests. The Council sometimes looks askance at this and keeps its distance, unless it is nudged by a powerful interest. Of course, all Permanent Representatives of members on the Council will stay until 9 p.m. even, if something of great interest to them is being considered.

The Council imposes sanctions. I am referring here not only to economic sanctions, but to sanctions in general. That is all right if they are imposed for good reasons. But the Council should not impose sanctions, if it does ensure follow-up, because then they will be disregarded by everyone. That is the case with weapons sanctions, and there are many other examples that can be cited.

The Council should not take action when one party is clearly at fault. The Brahimi report on peacekeeping tells us that one of the lessons to be learned is that a spade should be called a spade. The Council does not do that in some cases, which helps conflicts to continue. What sometimes happens is that the Council takes sides, even in deciding who the parties to a conflict are to the exclusion of others. In cases where there is a clear culprit, such as the case of UNITA in Angola, nothing has been done. Of course they continue. Other circumstances are, hopefully, now helping the resolution of that problem.

The role of the Economic and Social Council has been emphasized. The new direction and collaboration that is developing between the Council and the Economic and Social Council is welcome. There is also the need for very strong coordination between the various United Nations specialized agencies, which does not exist. It has not existed before the conflict, during the conflict and after the conflict.

I will conclude by making one recommendation. It is good that the Council occasionally visits countries or regions in conflict. That practice must be continued, in the view of my delegation. However, my delegation would also like to recommend that the Council sometimes hold its meetings away from Headquarters in New York. The Council has done that on two occasions. The first was in January 1972, in Africa, at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The other time — if I am not incorrect — was the following year in 1973, in Panama. This is a good practice. I think it will also give the Council an inside perspective on places other than New York. Maybe the Council should also hold those meetings when the weather in New York is too cold.

The President: I call on the representative of the Central African Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of the Central African Republic welcomes the proposed agenda, and we would like to share with the Council part of our modest experience.

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency during this month. Your presence is evidence of the sympathy and interest that your country, Singapore, has for the cause of sustainable development in Africa through the resolution of conflicts there. I also would like to thank Ambassador Lavrov of the Russian Federation, who very ably conducted the work of the Council during the previous month.

I appreciate the conduct of this work because it is interactive and strengthens the will of members and non-members of the Council to find compromise solutions to the difficult issues confronting Africa.

My delegation is pleased with the very informative presentations made by Ambassador Koonjul, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group on prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa, by Ambassador Kébé of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by Ambassador Šimonović, President of the Economic and Social Council. The statement of Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall, full of reflective thoughts, could enable greater coordination between the Security Council and the Working Group in order to respond to some pending issues that merit a just and lasting solution.

Africa is facing huge problems of great complexity, and their appropriate solution requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. Wherever the crises are, the same problems include poverty, HIV/AIDS, refugees, drought and famine.

It is very encouraging to note also that it is the African leaders themselves who are the first to do something about outbreaks of tension and conflict. My country, the Central African Republic, has been the scene of repeated crises in the past years. It was the first country in the African continent to receive great attention by African leaders, and this was very reassuring. The establishment on the ground of an inter-African force (MISAB) for the monitoring of the Bangui Agreements, followed by the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) and, finally, the United Nations Peace-building Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) certainly contributed to an improvement in the security situation.

We thank all African countries, friendly nations on other continents, the European Union, United Nations bodies and OAU bodies, near and far, that helped us to gradually re-establish national unity. However, I believe that MINURCA has not fully accomplished its mandate. Whereas the Central African Government wanted the extension of its mandate, its hasty retreat left a hint of lack of conviction that was witnessed by the international community. Why did MINURCA withdraw even though there was no political stability, even though a lot remained to be done in the political, social, economic and cultural areas? The Central African Republic, the patient, was still recovering when the doctor left the room.

A special meeting on cooperation with the Central African Republic was held in May 2000, where some promises of external aid were recorded. Repeated calls were made to have programmes that had been stopped made operational. Again, the implementation of the foreign aid promised was pitiful, just when the Central African Government was making progress. The question remains: is it possible to carry out national programmes while a country is trying to be reborn from its ashes?

To give an example: is it possible to implement a demobilization programme during the transitional period of seeking peace — that is, between the end of the conflict and the beginning of development? It is now nearly a year ago, on 27 May 2001, that there was an attempted coup in Bangui, and that, too, jeopardized normal life. Again, it was African countries that showed their concern.

Thanks to members of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CENSAD), the reestablishment of peace is gradually happening. The Acting Chairman of CENSAD, the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, spoke very eloquently. Its actions should be supported by the Security Council.

We are gathered here to think about what the work of the ad hoc Working Group should be. It is working successfully and has a very busy programme. What we expect of it is concrete work within the framework of the various Security Council resolutions on African conflicts. It is clear that African issues dominate the Council's agenda. Voices more eloquent than mine have raised in this Chamber the question of the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Taking the Central African crisis as an example, we have the impression that the Council has grown tired of this conflict, although it made enormous efforts to establish MINURCA to do the job, but then it was quickly eliminated while the situation on the ground was still risky.

A post-conflict State does not mean a peaceful State. The reestablishment of peace is a slow, long but certain process. I would like to thank all speakers and those who spoke about the case of the Central African Republic, whose experience has not been very convincing. The involvement of regional organizations in conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the

United Nations Charter, is very important. Nor should we forget the impact of non-governmental organizations, which are increasingly playing the role of mediator in national crises.

The work of the ad hoc Working Group, which we are considering, should save as a catalyst for the work of various ad hoc groups created in various places to find solutions to African crises. We do not want yet another working group that would duplicate the same functions in another programme. This Working Group, which would work in concert with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other regional and subregional organizations, should be able to establish priorities and deadlines. I am afraid that there might be some risk of overlapping in the work and the objectives, but my delegation believes that this new group might make a difference, compared to other groups previously created. Transparency and vigilance should be major assets. No regional organization should refuse to cooperate with this Group. Its work will play a crucial role in allowing the voices of countries confronting conflicts to be heard.

My delegation will work in close cooperation with the ad hoc Working Group, the establishment of which, we believe, is very welcome for all of us. We fully support its work programme and the role that the Security Council continues to play in this regard.

Before concluding, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate, to encourage and to wish full success to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, who will be starting his new functions in the coming months.

The President: Before I deliver my concluding remarks, I would like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jagdish Koonjul.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Mr. President, since you are going to be summarizing today's discussions, I will take the floor very briefly simply to comment on some of the points that have been raised.

First of all, I would like to thank all the speakers for their contributions and for their kind words addressed to me and to the members of the Working Group. Certain comments that they have made have already been answered by our colleagues in the Security Council. We are very much encouraged by the wide support for the ad hoc Working Group and for the programme of work that we have submitted. We are very appreciative of the comments that have been made, and we are certainly going to take them on board as we consider the future work of our Working Group.

Let me just take one or two points that have been raised and comment briefly on them. First of all, it is agreed by one and all that there needs to be greater coordination between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations. I think this point was made by almost all of the speakers. Therefore, there is a need to have very close coordination and contact, both with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) itself and with all the other subregional organizations.

Another proposal was made to invite, whenever possible, the executive heads of subregional organizations. I want to just say that this idea is very much on our mind, because this Working Group is an informal one, and we are obviously in a position to invite whoever can help to contribute to the work of the Working Group. Likewise, the ad hoc Working Group is going to be open — and I think the question of transparency and openness has been stressed. We should be able to meet with anyone who can contribute, as well as with those countries that are directly concerned with any subject under discussion. I just want to reassure members who have raised these points.

The other point that has been stressed is preventive actions and the possibility of using the subregional organizations as a means to get early warning on conflicts. We can also assure members that we will certainly look into that.

When Mr. Ibrahima Fall made his statement early this morning he mentioned the close contact that exists already between the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and our Secretary-General and also between the United Nations Secretariat and OAU secretariat. That is very true. They do meet every six months, once in New York and once when there is a meeting of the OAU Summit.

But we have not found the same kind of contact between the Security Council and the OAU Office. This is why I think we will now have to work much harder with the OAU, and especially with the OAU Observer Office here. I think the point has also been made that we have to be very clear about initiatives which are taken, because very often there can be divergence of views and policies as to what the OAU and the Security Council might be doing. So it will be extremely important to have a special channel of

communication, as Mr. Fall puts it, between the Security Council and the OAU Central Organ.

One question was asked by the distinguished Ambassador of Benin. It was rather a point of clarification that he was looking for with regard to what we had in mind with respect to election observation. This is a pretty sensitive issue. We have all felt in the Working Group that very often democratic elections are the beginning of a peace process, such as what we are doing in Sierra Leone. Now there are going to be elections and hopefully there is going to peace after that. But in some cases, elections have been at the very origin of conflicts, as is the case, for example, in Madagascar. The idea here is not only to observe elections at the last stages, when the elections are actually taking place, but to help with the electoral process right from the beginning. The Ambassador of Benin clearly pointed out how important it is that electoral lists be up to date at the time that they are prepared and renewed, because that is the time when the whole election process can be defeated. The idea would be therefore to assist any Member State, obviously at its request, in the whole electoral process, right from the beginning all the way until the end. There is also the question of coordination of the observation between OAU observers, United Nations observers and occasionally European Union observers.

The other important issue that has been mentioned is the question of illicit traffic in small arms and the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel of Experts on this issue. Here I just want to say that the Working Group, as we said earlier, is not going to be duplicating the work of the Security Council or any other body. This is definitely an important issue, but we feel that this matter is being addressed in other forums and other groups.

Somebody also mentioned the question of mercenaries, and that is also a matter that needs to be addressed. What we are going to try to do at the level of the Working Group is to revisit this issue and see whether the Working Group should be taking upon itself the work of trying to deal with the question of illicit trafficking in small weapons.

The final point is the importance, which everybody has been stressing, of having very close contact with the Economic and Social Council in order to have very special working relations with the advisory group on African countries coming out of conflicts. What we need to do here is not only to enhance the cooperation, but also, as Ambassador Greenstock puts it, to make sure that we see the results on the ground. We certainly look forward to working very closely with Ambassador Ivan Šimonović on this matter, and we hope very soon to be able to have him attend one of our meetings and share his views on this.

These are the few points that I wanted to make at this stage.

The President: In my concluding remarks, let me first thank all the speakers for the kind words addressed to my delegation and to myself. It has been a great honour for Singapore to have chaired this meeting on such an important subject. Having personally served as Permanent Representative to the United Nations 30 years ago, it has been a pleasure and privilege for me to have interacted with distinguished Permanent Representatives during this week.

When I opened the meeting this morning, I indicated that at the end of the debate I would try to draw on some specific conclusions from our discussions, which I hope will feed into the future work of the Council's Working Group on Africa, as well as the work of the Council on African issues. I also hope to further refine these points and distribute them eventually to Member States on my own responsibility.

Before drawing these conclusions I would like to once again thank Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Ambassador Amadou Kébé, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović and Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall for their excellent contributions. On behalf of the Security Council, let me also express our deep appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Ibrahima Fall for the invaluable contributions that he has made to the work of the Security Council. We have immensely benefited from his incisive analysis of issues and his tremendous vision. We wish him all the best in his new endeavours.

There can be no doubt that we have had today a rich debate. When Mauritius and Singapore sent out their letter of invitation to all Members, we really had no idea that this invitation would receive such an overwhelming response, 35 non-members addressing the Council. It indicates that there is a great desire on the part of the membership to give input and recommendations to the Council's work on Africa.

It is not an easy task in a brief summary to capture the many points that were made today. My remarks should therefore be viewed as a first step towards culling the important points made today. I shall divide my remarks into two parts. Firstly, I shall try to draw some general points that were made. Secondly, I shall list some of the specific suggestions that were put across for the ad hoc Working Group to follow up on. I apologize in advance if I have left out any major points made by speakers, but will capture these points in a consolidated summary

Several general points were made. Firstly, as President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Ivan Šimonović said effective strategies to deal with conflict prevention and recovery require a comprehensive approach. Indeed, this is probably one of the main conclusions we could draw from today's debate. Many speakers observe that there had been a series of initiatives on Africa, ranging from the broad initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to more specific initiatives. A challenge is to ensure that all these initiatives work together coherently. Here, too, the ad hoc Working Group could make a valuable contribution.

The second general point that emerged was a strong appeal made by non-members for Council members to consider carefully all the points of view put forward today, especially by African Member States. I have no doubt that Council members have listened carefully to the points that have been made and requested by the African Group. Some members of the Council have also responded to these points. As a result, we have had a rich and interactive dialogue. But, then, dialogue is not an end in itself. Several speakers have emphasized that the Council needs to work out a partnership with African States so as to respond to African challenges. We hope that the healthy dialogue we have had today will help create the partnership that many have called for.

Thirdly, it was suggested that the Working Group could work out a balance sheet of successes, failures and lessons learned in tackling the problems in Africa. Ambassador Greenstock, for example, suggested a lessons-learned exercise on Sierra Leone. I am citing only one example, but many other concrete examples were offered for lessons-learned exercises.

Fourthly, it was suggested that, unlike the Security Council — which tends to be more formal and more reactive — the Working Group was an informal and ad hoc body and could be more proactive and could experiment with innovative measures. That was suggested by the Chairman of the African Group, the Permanent Representative of Benin, and his suggestion may be worth reflecting on.

Fifthly, there was broad agreement among all speakers that the Working Group should not duplicate the work carried out by the Security Council; rather, it should assist the Security Council in its work and should provide value-added contributions.

I should now like to turn to some of the specific suggestions that were conveyed today to the ad hoc Working Group. Those specific suggestions relate to the seven items outlined in the ad hoc Working Group's programme of work.

With regard to the Economic and Social Council, the following suggestions were made: that the Working Group could appoint a representative to work with the Economic and Social Council's ad hoc Advisory Group when it is created, in preparation for the high-level General Assembly meeting on Africa to be held on 16 September, which could include discussions on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); that there is a need for the Working Group to adopt an integrated approach and to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, another area for cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; and that cooperation between the Working Group and the Economic and Social Council could address the failure of partnerships between members of the United Nations family and could help to address the economic and social causes of conflict.

On confidence-building in the Mano River region, it was suggested that the Council should listen to the views of African regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on what needs to be done for the region; and that the Working Group could look for joint solutions affecting the three Mano River Union countries — for example, joint disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, a joint plan of action against the illicit arms trade, and possibly a rationalization of the posts of the two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General.

On the role of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in Africa, it was suggested that the

Special Representatives should work closely with each other despite their different geographical mandates, especially in the field of preventive diplomacy.

On assistance to electoral processes, while speakers noted that the Security Council had no direct role in elections observation, the Working Group could reflect on formulating rules acceptable to all concerning a possible partnership between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to observe electoral processes in the months preceding elections, during elections and during the announcement of results. That will obviously require careful consideration. The Working Group should also help to ensure that the Council remains seized of the situation in conflict areas, even after successful elections. Premature withdrawal from such areas in the past led to the re-emergence of factors that could embroil States in yet another conflict.

On the establishment of groups of friends, speakers noted that groups of friends were a good idea, particularly useful for gathering information on specific situations and in the areas of mediation and providing good offices. However, they could not replace the Council in its work.

On the question of cooperation with the OAU and subregional organizations, there was a particularly rich discussion. One suggestion was that the Working Group should facilitate the circulation of all OAU Central Organ decisions and those of other security organs of subregional organizations as Security Council documents to ensure their effective implementation. There was also a suggestion that the Working Group should facilitate periodic interaction and dialogue between the Council and the OAU, and that there could be regular exchanges of early-warning information between the Working Group and the OAU.

On the question of inviting non-governmental organizations and academics to join the Group's work, many speakers noted that this was useful to their exchanges in seminars involving non-governmental organizations and think tanks and it could contribute to the Council's decision-making.

As I said, this brief summary cannot do justice to the rich debate that we had today. Earlier, my officers had given me a long list of suggestions to mention in my concluding remarks, but, given the lateness of the hour, I could mention only a few of them. I am also pleased to inform the Council that my summary will be posted on the Singapore Mission's web site, and that later we will post a more detailed record of all the main points that were made during today's debate.

The main purpose of today's debate was to provide a stepping stone for the Council to continue focusing actively on the many challenges that we face in Africa. We hope that, when the next debate is held on this subject, members will refer to the rich debate we had today. In that connection, I am pleased to hear that the United Kingdom will be building on the results of today's debate during its July presidency.

Finally, I should like to thank all participants for their participation and for their contributions to the debate.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4539

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4539th meeting

Wednesday, 22 May 2002, 9.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Katzarski
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Wang Donghua
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Moutalib
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Peralta
	Norway	Mr. Brattskar
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Howe-Jones
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 9.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the elections held in Sierra Leone on 14 May 2002. It congratulates the people of Sierra Leone on the peaceful and orderly way in which the elections were held. It commends the National Electoral Commission and all those responsible for the successful management of the elections, and commends UNAMSIL for their invaluable supporting role. The Council notes that the various electoral observation groups were impressed by the Sierra Leonean people's commitment to democracy and their determination to vote. The Council calls on all political parties and their supporters to work together to strengthen democracy and thereby assure continuing peace.
>
> "The Security Council considers the elections an important milestone on the road to peace and security in Sierra Leone and the Mano River region. The next challenge for Sierra Leone and the international community is the further consolidation of peace. There is much still to do, including the extension of public services to make real the restoration of government authority throughout the country, the further enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the security sector, and the effective reintegration of all ex-combatants. A sustained effort from the international community will be needed to achieve our shared objective of sustainable peace and security, which must be the basis for Sierra Leone's economic regeneration and future development. The Council urges all donors to contribute generously towards these ends, including by providing urgently needed funds to the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
>
> "The Security Council will continue to pay close attention to developments in Sierra Leone and the Mano River region. The Council requests the Secretary-General to monitor the situation there closely and to keep the Council informed of any significant developments."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/14.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4540

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4540th meeting

Wednesday, 22 May 2002, 9.35 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Katzarski
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Wang Donghua
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Moutalib
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Ms. Réhaut
	Mexico	Mr. Peralta
	Norway	Mr. Brattskar
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Howe-Jones
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

Admission of new Members

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2002/558).

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Admission of new Members

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2002/558)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

In a letter dated 20 May 2002 addressed to the Secretary-General, the President and the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of East Timor submitted the application of their country for membership in the United Nations. Their letter has been circulated in document S/2002/558.

Under the provisions of rule 59 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, unless the Council decides otherwise, an application for membership shall be referred by the President of the Council to the Committee on the Admission of New Members. Accordingly, unless I hear a proposal to the contrary, I shall refer the application of the Democratic Republic of East Timor to the Committee on the Admission of New Members for examination and report.

As I hear no objection, it is so decided.

I propose that the Committee on the Admission of New Members meet tomorrow at 10 a.m., in Conference Room 7, to consider the application of the Democratic Republic of East Timor for membership in the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 9.40 p.m.